

DOES GOD MATTER FOR ME?

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Edited by

W. E. BOARDMAN, M.A.

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DOES GOD MATTER FOR ME?

By

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INTRODUCTION

WE were asked to make this book 'practical' rather than theoretical; to emphasise the consequences of belief in God rather than reasons for belief in God, or to provide a 'constructive' philosophy about God. We were also asked to make the book 'popular' and 'personal', and not suited only to experts or professional philosophers. But we cannot do exclusively what we are asked to—nor, indeed, were we asked to suggest practical considerations *alone*. We thought we were bound to attend, at first, to those who do not believe in God 'practically': that is, to those—of whom there are so many among our countrymen—who would not deny outright that they believe in God, nor insist that there is *no* God to believe in, and who can give reasons for that opinion; but to men who are not very interested in the subject, do not see how anything in detail can be known about it, and in the concrete live their lives almost wholly *as if* there were no God. We thought, therefore, that we would then speak, by way of contrast, of those who throughout human history have manifested some kind of desire for God, and have done all sorts of things—some queer, some hideous, some noble, some pathetic—because of a

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belief in God, rudimentary as that belief may have been. We then thought that we should turn our mind to those who, for the first time in human history, are urging forward with extreme energy an atheist campaign, and are coupling this with a definite social campaign which is intended to triumph all the world over. The preliminary chaotic consequences of this are such as to awaken in very many a desire to be able to believe in and to trust to God to a degree that they had never, so far, experienced. So many millions of men and women are to-day living a life of continuous fear, or at least of desperate anxiety, due to the uncertainty of everything, that they feel that they would give anything to possess, or recapture, the sense of stability and optimism that is undoubtedly one product of an active belief in God.

After this, therefore, we felt that we ought to offer, very briefly, some reasons (to our mind imperative) for believing that God exists, and must be knowable to us as possessing (or rather, being) certain 'attributes,' because the Catholic does not admit for a moment that the belief in His Nature and Existence is an affair merely of guess-work, or the product of emotion, or of the desire that it should be true. Anything of that sort would be unworthy of man, of his mind, and

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of God. We affirm at the outset that the Catholic holds that he can know, by means of his intelligence (an endowment shared, of course, by every human creature), that God exists, and much about His Nature, and can know this with certainty, and in such a way that he could not be dislodged from this certainty even if he wished to be. We can, then, in the latter part of this book, try to show what can, and should, be the consequences of this belief, in this transitory world of ours—consequences no less consoling than exacting.

In fairness to the publishers I ought to say that even so short a book as this has been written in difficult circumstances and amid constant interruptions; that, with great patience and generosity, they have allowed me thrice to outstrip the promised time-limits; that I shall probably repeat myself, almost verbally, several times—but, then, that is not due merely to carelessness, but to my desire to emphasise certain points; and literary elegance was not my concern; and finally, that certain quotations may not be quite accurate—but, then, they will not be those that really matter, and I believe that even Aristotle hardly ever quoted Homer right.

CHAPTER I

GOD OUT OF REACH

THIS book will be read by some who are 'anxious' about God, but not by those who are 'not interested' in the subject, and probably not by those who would not profess disbelief in God, but who feel it is almost indecent to talk about Him; that He is out of reach and would be almost degraded were He brought down to a level on which He could be met, so to say, somehow on equal terms, as a writer must surely profess to do with his subject if he is to talk sense about it. They are apt to think this all the more if now and again they have actually 'felt' themselves unusually 'close to' God; helped by God; in awe of God. They would do anything rather than talk about such experiences. They feel that 'sharing,' to use a modern word, is very nearly a disgusting form of spiritual exhibitionism: to them, what is sacred is secret.

This is not only quite 'English,' in the older sense, but corresponds to something rather good in the English character. We used to be apt to distrust the Englishman who talked glibly about anything, let alone God.

Other nations can easily laugh at us about that; and we are tolerably well prepared to smile at ourselves about it: all the same, taking characters as a whole, we notice that a certain reticence is usually allied to good and solid qualities. It can, of course, also correspond to the discomfort of the man who knows that the subject is important in itself, but that he has never honestly looked into it, being mentally too lazy to enjoy looking deeply into anything, and fearful of the consequences of doing so. It also corresponds somewhat to the instinct of those native tribes who certainly believe in God, but consider Him to be so far above them that it is useless, or inadvisable, to try to have anything direct to do with Him, and quite shocking to name Him, and prefer to associate with all sorts of spirits—mostly malicious—that are nearer to humanity. A couple of generations ago, travellers who were just beginning to study anthropology seriously, and could seldom talk any save their own languages, were systematically defeated by tribe after tribe, who resented having these deeply buried beliefs of theirs excavated. So the traveller announced that the tribes were atheist and gave no little assistance to evolutionary theories such as those mentioned below. Even more sophisticated peoples like

the Greeks and the Romans felt themselves much more at home with subsidiary powers, like heroes, nymphs, fauns, or pleasant little personages who supervised nurseries, kitchens, or the fields. This did not at all prevent their believing in true gods and goddesses, and indeed a mysterious power behind all of them alike. The Englishman, in short, possesses, or used to possess, many simple and amiable characteristics in common with races in whom educationists are, to-day, rapidly destroying them. Indeed, they have themselves, for the most part, lost them.

On the other hand, it is still very difficult to find a man who declares dogmatically that there is no God, and offers reasons for there being none. I am not here thinking of the rather more thoughtful man who admits the existence of a God "but not of a 'personal' God." In a large assembly of doctors, who were discussing the relation between religion and medicine, I met with only one who rejected any idea of God at all, and he was already old, and was felt by the middle-aged and younger men present to be out of date, if not out of court.

But this did not mean that those who professed their belief in 'a God' drew any special consequences from this, knew why they so believed, or translated their belief into

any particular sort of action. They seemed prepared to say that God, though doubtless He existed, must be so great as to be totally 'above' us; that because we could not imagine Him, we could therefore *know* nothing about Him; that we could not therefore presume to say anything about Him; we are perfectly aware that we don't know much about all sorts of things that are more nearly of our measure, like politics, economics, or music, or other things that are human in the sense that some at least of our cleverer fellow-humans do tackle them and make a good thing of them. But those are, precisely, the cleverer ones, and *I* don't profess to have more than average brains. So when it comes to anything on the scale of God, naturally I don't profess to know or to be able to know anything about Him. I try to do my job; to do no harm to anyone—in fact, to do a good turn to my neighbour when opportunity offers—and beyond that I trust to luck, and hope that I shall get through as decently as can be expected.

Taken as it stands, this is not a bad or unpromising attitude, because it is modest—unless, indeed, the man is indulging in a sort of inverted boasting, and wants to suggest that he is a fine fellow for holding his head high in presence of these mysteries, and hints

that bluff common sense is to be preferred to highbrow philosophising. Of course if he goes on to assert that no one *can* know anything about God, he is not only over-shooting his mark, but also doing a bit of philosophising himself. What he should stick to saying is, that *he* does not know anything about God, and feels that he never will. We shall have to come back to these topics later on.

There is another attitude of mind which is far from being altogether bad, because it, too, has some modesty about it, and the only attitude of mind that has nothing to be said for it is the bumptious one. This second bent of mind, or mood, leads a man to say: "If there is a God, He must be so great that He cannot care about so insignificant an insect as myself, or about men in general." The former attitude of mind makes him say: "God is so great that my poor little mind cannot get up to Him"; the second: "I am so small that the great God could not stoop so low as to pay attention to me." This is not altogether unlike the state of mind in which David began to write the Eighth Psalm. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Yes, human man, that Thou shouldst visit him?" But soon enough the Psalmist recaptured himself, and saw that man is not so insignificant after all.

These are two attitudes of mind, or ways of feeling about oneself, rather than arguments. There is here no thinking the matter out. One 'argument,' however, is a very common one, and is so important that I will just mention it here, to return to it afterwards. During the War, we constantly heard men saying: "If there is a God, why doesn't He stop the War?" The argument was: If He doesn't because He can't, He is not almighty; and if He can but won't, He is cruel. Observe that it is *assumed* that if there is a God at all, He must be both all-powerful and all-good. Human nature revolts against the idea of just any sort of God. The argument in itself did not go towards proving that there was no God; it revealed the fact that the men using it could not see how, if there were, He could be other than feeble or malicious; and so, since they were sure that a true God couldn't be either, they side-slipped in their logic and said that there could be *no* God.

I am not proposing to deal with that here; but am trying to clear the ground by showing how men can be handicapped in the matter, and what are the reasons for their thinking or caring as little as they seem to about God. These reasons are, so far, such as depend not a little on character, and there are some more characters to be mentioned which make it

unlikely that their possessors will attend much to the subject ; or conditions of life which make it specially hard for men to do so. Interestingly, three such characters are not unlike those mentioned by our Lord in the parable of the Sower, when He talked about the grain falling, some of it on the hard-trodden field-side path ; or into the shallow earth in the crevices of rocks ; or again among other growths like brambles or thistles that choked the new blade.

One is the character you call ' tough ' in the undesirable sense. For there is a sense in which it is a very good thing to be tough. A tough character in the good sense has any amount of staying-power, or resistance to adverse circumstances, and does not melt into sentimentalism. Nor do I mean the character assumed to belong to prize-fighters, for example, all-in wrestlers, sailors, or big-business-men ; for all these are often very soft-hearted in various ways. A prize-fighter is often an extremely childlike creature, if you catch him at the proper moment ; and we used to have a whole series of revolting films showing how the relentless millionaire became perfectly maudlin over his only daughter with the mother's eyes. Nor do I mean

merely hard-hearted men ; for plenty of very hard-hearted men, like many of the Puritans, have believed most energetically in God. In fact, these provide a whole argument—of an emotional sort—against religion, that is, their religion. Dickens is full of such characters.

I mean, if I may so express myself, the sort of man who admits nothing into his consciousness that he cannot see or touch. Thus I knew a young speed-merchant whose entire life was made up of motor-bicycles and the speed you could get out of them. True, after an austere month of speeding, he used to have an orgy ; but that was just reaction. Having nothing to govern his mind with, he found that his senses took their revenge, declaring themselves starved. It was sheer pain to him to try to follow the simplest argument : he took not the slightest interest in what it proved, however important—for example, that God existed. “ I daresay He does,” he would reply : “ I can’t pick any holes in what you say ; but it *doesn’t interest* me.” He also had not the slightest interest in anything historical. He said he had heard the name Napoleon, but knew nothing whatsoever about the man. “ Why should I ? ” he asked naïvely : “ he’s dead.” I may say that later on he fell in love and became much

more human and humane; but until that happened his mind was completely impervious to anything not concerned with metal and petrol and so forth: he was, indeed, seriously thinking of putting a bullet through his skull because he had had an accident and they said that perhaps he must not drive his motor-bicycle any more. You might imagine that this young man was singularly unpleasant. Not at all. We were quite close friends. Moreover, his character had not 'set.' We have probably met people in whom it seems, at any rate, to have set. They are then wholly selfish; insensitive; incapable of real friendship and not wishing for any; unable to attach any meaning or value to notions like honour, truth, or chastity: and they are, I might add, personally quite uninteresting, but also, in their bad moments, very sick of life. You see, I hope, what I mean by 'tough' in the unfortunate sense; and also, how very difficult it is for such temperaments to be conscious of God, or the need of God.

A different sort of character is the shallow and frivolous one, which cannot attend to anything that does not 'thrill' it at the moment. This certainly does not mean that such a character cannot take God into consideration at all. On the contrary, there are plenty of thrills to be got out of religion. A

cynical playwright knows perfectly well just when to apply the name of God, to provide the audience with a 'kick,' just as an electric needle can make a frog jump about although its spine is severed. Deep organ-pipes can send a quiver up you and make you feel half a saint already. Some people succumb to hymns in much the same way, especially in the evening. That lasts till the next meal. After it, back to earth! You do not expect that sort of person to endure very long at anything. They have their enthusiasms; froth up; simmer down again. You hardly expect them to be able to fall in love, for example, very lastingly or self-sacrificially. On the other hand, they are charmingly light-hearted—charmingly, that is, while they are young: the charm evaporates when they begin to go bald, or have to *try* to be charming. You choose someone rather more reliable. The middle-aged butterfly has ceased to be attractive. Well, by need of sheer contrast, they may begin to value that deep, unchanging thing that God is and that enduring equilibrium that obedience to God provides.

Yet another kind of man is the one who is so busy that he literally has not time to attend to anything, not even his wife and children, if any. It is possible to get as 'busy' as that

even over excellent matters, like charities, or anything that is 'organised.' The excellence of the cause will not prevent the man's soul from shrivelling, though his activities will prevent his noticing that it has done so. He becomes more and more 'external' to what he manages; and whatever else God is, He is not simply something external, however venerable, to be worked for as I might work for a hospital.

There are, further, two sorts of people, to one of which our Lord hardly alluded, though He spoke emphatically about the other. One is the class of those who are so miserable as to be practically unable to get their heads above the waters of their own distress; too beaten down *below* what is materially right and just, to be able to take what is spiritual into consideration: the other is the class of those who are too comfortable to feel any need of doing so.

I think there was a good deal of destitution in Palestine in our Lord's time; but there was a habit of alms-giving, and people who live very largely in the open air, under a sun that is usually blazing hot, and need to eat much less than we do, especially of meat—a wheat-patch, a vine-stock, a fig-tree will supply almost all they need—are in a position quite different from that of our own

destitute. And even these modern destitutes of ours seem to us, as a rule, infinitely happier in their lot than their would-be agitators would like them to be or even are themselves. (For you never met a cheerful agitator nor a really friendly highbrow.) Their despondencies are all but equalled by their amazing pluck, good temper, and cork-like power of returning to the surface almost at once. Nor do I here insist on their wonderful kindness towards those even a little worse off than themselves. None the less, there exists a great deal of sheer misery, especially in cold weather. When you are very cold, you have no spirit left for anything. Even pluck passes when you have yourself passed into a middle-age that *should* be a 'prime of life': it is there that I have seemed to find the true despondency, a soddenness of soul, and the abandonment of effort because hope itself has been given up. All the promises have been broken; even the illusions of youth have been dissipated. In such circumstances, it becomes very hard indeed to raise the mind towards anything spiritual at all. "Nothing makes no difference," neither God nor non-God, Communism nor Capitalism. It is precisely the people who hope for nothing more from earth who do *not* provide themselves with religion as an opiate (see

p. 22). All this talk of people throwing off images of what they would like to be and then pretending they are real and ending by thinking them so, is bad as psychology and quite false to experience. None the less, as the Popes insist, if men are being forced to lead a sub-human life, it is very hard to ask them to lead a super-human one. And even, we might add, if they are not getting what their senses deserve, it is unfair to ask them to concern themselves with God the Invisible. Yet I have, here, to register my experience that the genuine Catholic, almost in proportion as this life cheats him, becomes able to rise easily and serenely to God, whom this life disguises from him. But I am not stressing this here, however much I could do so by means of memories of human people in stoke-holes, down mines, in polite suburbs, extracted from brothels, or on their death-beds.—Yet, even so, I do not quite know why I should mention such men and women, and not mention people in palatial drawing-rooms or parliamentary lobbies, who feel themselves no less cheated. . . . It remains, however, true that if a man is habitually treated unjustly by his church-going or chapel-going fellow-man, he cannot be too acidly rebuked if he shifts his hatred or contempt to chapel and to church, and

perience a creeping of the flesh and a tingling of their spiritual scalp. The Book of Job is full of such experiences—

When I said : ‘ My bed shall comfort me,
Then Thou scarest me with dreams,
And terrifiest me through visions,
So that my soul chooseth strangling
And death rather than these my bones !

Now a word was stealthily brought to me,
And mine ear received a whisper thereof—
In thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth upon man.
A breath passed over my face,
The hair of my flesh stood up . . .
It stood still, but I could not see what it
was . . .
Then a form stood before mine eyes—
Silence—and then a voice. . . .

That is uncanny to the last degree, and comfortable people would dislike it very much.

I reserve till later the modern phenomenon of a deliberate attack on every version of belief in God. That is due to an outside force, and here we have been trying to see what allies Disbelief can discover inside the man himself, what predispositions to disbelief—theoretical or practical—may be ours from the beginning. We might indeed refer to the temperament proper to most of our ill-educated ‘*intelligentzia*’—a word the use

of which labels the user forthwith. It is, in older years, the temperament of those who support, even within this island, an anti-God campaign; but the temperament of the agitator is not, thank God, sufficiently representative: the temperament of our working classes is well-balanced and friendly, and in no way *hostile* to the idea of God until the mind has been duped and passions inflamed; the temperament of that shockingly ill-educated intelligentzia is, I agree, an unpleasant one, but worse because of its conceit than because of its affection for spoiling things, especially things that older people prize, which is common in the young at all periods. Boys break things to show their strength; adolescents deny things to display their emancipation, though in reality to use the catchwords—Russian ideology; Spanish democracy, and so forth—is just as bad a succumbing to fashion as when groups of still older people, not least the theologians of the moment, succumb for a year at a time to words like ‘emphasis,’ ‘value,’ ‘experience,’ and so on. If we have to refer to this again, we hope to do so briefly, for it is ugly, and offensively so.

Well, we had meant to begin this book in a spirit of friendliness and nothing else; to show that we sympathised with whole

classes of those who seem not to believe in God, and who genuinely do find it far easier not to think about Him than to attend to Him, and why that is so. But since we have used some unfriendly sentences a moment ago, let us end this chapter by adding that another reason why plenty of men are 'put off' religion is, that they have met too many believers whom they dislike and of whom they have real grounds for disapproving. By these, I do not mean real hypocrites, still less honest Christian sinners; but people who profess belief, go to church, repeat the right formulas, perform the correct kneed-rill, and yet are perfectly superficial in all that; are—not vicious—but as hard, as unkind, as money-worshipping, as sensitive about social grades, as untruthful and as gossiping, as anyone who professes no belief, and even worse than they. Indeed, it may have been their experience that 'religious' persons are less amusing, generous, truly considerate, honourable, or even happy, than many an easy-going agnostic. I remember staying in an army mess, and reflecting afterwards that the only uncharitable things said on any evening had been spoken by myself.

We, then, who do believe in God, ought to be overwhelmingly conscious of the frightful

discrepancy too often existing between our beliefs and our behaviour ; between what we say we love, and what we really like ; and we begin this book by frankly owning up to it. We begin by saying as openly as possible that we Theists, Christians, or Catholics are very bad advertisements of what we genuinely believe in and preach as the truest and best thing in the world. And since we find it so difficult to live up to our creed, and indeed know that we never really can live up to it, we shall be very far indeed from judging harshly those who have no creed at all. But we shall also, in our very confession, have recognised that a true belief in God is a very exacting thing.

CHAPTER II

MAN'S ACHE FOR GOD

I

IN the preceding chapter we accumulated various reasons for the possibility of men's feeling no particular need of God, why they do not think about Him, and may even vaguely dislike the whole topic of religion. Wishful to suggest nothing that might seem unkindly criticism nor an imputing of really bad motives, we did not dwell upon the possibility of men's deliberately turning their minds from religion lest it should make them uncomfortable and prevent their doing what they want to. "It might interfere with me," said one man, very frankly. And another, chaffing me, on the whole, said: "What's my youth for, if not to commit plenty of sins to be sorry for later on!" But we wish to be on the side of those who think the best of everyone so long as they can.

In this chapter we want to say that mankind at large has always believed in something that must be called 'God,' and behaved in various ways because of this belief; then we shall ask whether there is anything in that, or whether we must confess that the

human race has always been the victim of a sort of itch, a sham appetite, of a *maladie imaginaire*, so that it has 'worshipped God' without any good reason.

We are certainly not going to argue that there must be something 'in' religion because people have found that it made them happy, or because it was at least useful to governments for keeping the masses in order. We could certainly argue that if a thing is true, you are happier in the long run for believing it; but it is obvious that if a thing makes you happier, at least for the time being, it does not follow that it is true. Thus many a mother rocked herself in the illusion that her son, missing in the War, had not been killed. Perhaps she was all the unhappier when at last she had to give up her belief; but for the time it kept her 'happy,' and possibly alive.

As for 'keeping the masses in order,' this cynically opportunist phrase has had a long history. Even before Christ, a sceptical Roman put forward exactly that policy—religion should be supported *ad coercendam plebem*. But it was a very short-sighted one. The Romans themselves found out that religion could excite the populace quite as much as it could control it, and they had to publish edicts to keep religion itself in order.

And when Christianity dawned, it was that very religion which prevented the Christians from obeying the Emperor, who told them to worship him as God. They refused, and the empire ran red with martyrs' blood.

But the notion has been recently revived and made much use of in the shape: 'Religion is the opium of the people.' It is argued that rich and powerful persons—*i.e.* the capitalist 'class'—have encouraged religion because it kept the masses meek and obedient, and not so much as expecting to be happy in this life, because they transferred all their hopes to the next. This phrase is being dropped in proportion as it becomes known that Karl Marx, who is supposed to have originated it, meant nothing of the sort by it. He is, I repeat, supposed to have meant by it: "Capitalists administer dope, in the shape of religion, to the working-classes." The words actually occur in a highly rhetorical passage, written by Marx when he was very young, and, as he said, 'coquetting' with the German philosopher Hegel. Hegel taught, roughly, that you were aware only of your own mind, and could not attach validity to any of the ideas it threw up, not even that of your 'I-hood.' A sort of world-mind was inevitably evolving itself within everything, and 'projecting'

ideas in front of itself which appeared to be true, though in reality they could not be known to possess any objective validity at all. This is not the place to discuss that philosophy as such; the point is that Marx was just then very fascinated by it, and held that man, evolving, inevitably threw off unsubstantial ideas, among which were those representing himself as he would like to be. Men, very unhappy, fancied to themselves an ideally happy and powerful man, put it away in the skies—since there was nothing like it upon earth—pretended it was real, and called it God. Thus man doped *himself* and managed to remain patient in adversity. Hence Marx in no way alluded to wicked capitalists using religion as a dope for the people, but regarded man as inventing religion out of his own head, and giving it *to himself* as dope when his level of social life was so low that he felt too unhappy without it.

Marx never quite shook himself free from Hegelianism of a sort, inasmuch as he ended by holding that a man was the inevitable product of economic forces and of nothing else. He destroyed therefore man's personality by reducing him to a mere plaything and even creation of these forces, having no real intelligence nor power of choice. He

It is, however, valuable to see that Marx and Freud, by different roads, reach a point at which they have un-made man. They have reduced the free, intelligently-choosing person to a helpless individual, pulped into the State so that he loses even his individuality. Where, however, belief in God be maintained, the individual is seen to be of incalculable value. Certainly he will be found living in Society, co-corporate with his fellow-men: for all that, he is a little world in himself, intelligent and free and with power to make contracts and with his own rights, and, what is more, fit to fulfil himself first of all in a family and a home, 'institutions' which the Absolute Atheist State detests. In a word, if a man be truly created and preserved and destined by God, he has a tremendous value; if he is but a helpless affair of instinct, he has none at all, and is not even properly man. Belief in God is the best and indeed only way of preserving the true dignity of Man. Anyway, Freud's stock is consistently declining.

2

Much more sensible, and also more picturesque, were the endeavours common three-quarters of a century ago—some of them survive—so to study and compare

'religions' as to discover some one cause which accounted for them all—set them going, so to say; a cause which would enable us to dispense, as it was put, with the 'hypothesis of God.'

This was partly due to the boom in a misunderstood Darwinism. Darwin very interestingly conjectured that different sorts of animals 'evolved' somehow out of one sort, and perhaps they did. He offered further conjectures, which were less happy, as to *how* they did. People rushed ahead and attempted to argue that all living things, and in fact everything, had evolved out of one original thing. The first result of this was to suggest that the Bible account of Creation was 'wrong,' an awful shock to a people whose religion was based on the authority of the Bible and on nothing else save their subjective impressions. The next logical side-slip was the suggestion that if God didn't do it like that, we don't know how He did it, and perhaps He didn't do it at all. If one asked the courageous evolutionist how the original 'thing' got there; why it changed; why it changed in any definite direction, and so on, one would have been answered that was not the affair of the man of Science, whose business it was to tell you 'that,' and never 'why.' *Given* the living,

evolution upwards received a bad knock. Thus the Australian aborigines are found to be neither primitive nor evolving, but the reverse. I agree that the disappearance of many a tribe owing to white civilisation having introduced them to alcohol, gunpowder, phthisis, smallpox, and venereal disease, has been much accelerated: also, to the white man's habit of taking pot-shots at Natives to see if he could wing them—I have met men of forty who did this when seventeen—he not considering that a Black Man was human at all. Even the much-esteemed Egyptian religion, or group of religions, turned out to have been much purer in its earlier stages than it afterwards became. Only quite late did Egypt become haunted by the ghosts of a million crocodiles, ibises, and mummified cats. In short, Religions submit to no 'law' of upward spiritual evolution; they become more complicated, which is quite a different thing. Probably the only complete exception is the Hebrew religion, which did become consistently more spiritual, against odds.

None the less, vigorous attempts were made to discover a materialist key which should open all the religious locks. For example, the theory of 'Animism.'

It was assumed that primitive man saw the

clouds floating by, the trees waving in the invisible wind, water bubbling, and so on, and decided that they were all 'animated' by a life like his own. In fact, so powerful were storms, or wild animals, or volcanoes, that he concluded that their life was like, but superior to, his own. Little by little, therefore, he 'ensouled' all these portents with an independent 'spirit,' and again, little by little these 'spirits' were generalised into an independent Chief Spirit, which thus became 'God.' The idea of 'God,' therefore, was based on a mistake, and was itself fallacious.

The difficulty about this is, that while men certainly did think in that way about natural phenomena, there is no proof at all that they made their 'spirits' coalesce into one Spirit. The whole of Mesopotamia, for example, was full of animism; but the spirits never got farther than a great number of secondary godlets, so to call them; no one can show that the great Babylonian or Assyrian gods emerged from a quantity of little 'souls.' A special version of this theory concerned Ancestor-worship. Not only in your dreams did you appear to wander all over the place, and so, were equipped with a sort of detachable soul or Self, subsisting outside your body; but, in your dreams you might see your great-

grandfather, who had died long ago. So little by little you exalted your ancestors into family gods ; and tribal kings into superior gods ; and finally you struck out the idea of a universal or anyway national god.

It would have been neat and tidy if this could have been shown to have happened. But it did not. China offers a very good example of ancestor-worship : but these ancestors by no means regularly (if ever) magnify themselves into gods ; still less do they coalesce into one God.

Others have argued that anything queer—like a piece of twisted wood, or a coloured stone—would do as jumping-off ground for fancies that should become religious in the long run (Fetichism) ; or, again, Totemism meant that you took (possibly quite haphazardly, or because something impressed you or astonished you) a vegetable or an animal, like a carrot or a kangaroo, for your family crest, so to say, and decided that you must not marry anyone whose crest was the same (or, alternatively, unless it was the same), because you were all descended from an original Carrot or Kangaroo ; and in time you made a divine aboriginal ancestor out of the first Carrot. The system, with many variations, has existed, but in so small a part of the earth that no one now dreams of offering it as the origin of

Religion. Other people have offered the Corn-Spirit, the Sex-Urge, or Ritual Dances as the origin of Religion. The last suggestion seems so odd that it is worth adding a line about it. Briefly—the Individual finds that he feels quite different when he is dancing along with Others. Something greater than himself lays hold of him when he indulges in a Community Dance. He gets uplifted, enthralled, ecstatic (in a word, giddy—no; there is more than that: I saw in Africa that certain dances have a real psychological effect). He therefore thinks that some superior power has laid hold of him, and begins to fancy there is a ‘god.’

An extremely popular theory was that Religion grew out of Magic. There was a pre-magic stage of evolution: a magical one; gradually a religious age, and now, we are passing out of that into the scientific age.

The theory is that men were once upon a time quite ignorant about natural ‘laws’ and cause and effect, and so left everything to chance. If it did not rain, their crops perished, but they could not help that. But then, a few men discovered that they could, so they thought, coerce the elements: they lit a fire—the sun shone: they threw water into the air, and behold, it sympathetically rained:

they recited formulas known to none but them, and their enemy died.*

Hence grew up medicine-men, witches and witch-doctors, all of them professing to know what others didn't, and so, to be able to perform what others couldn't. This has been called 'science born out of due time'—thus scientific men now 'harness electricity,' which most of us can't do. However, there came a moment when the formula failed: you threw all the water you could into the air, and no rain fell; everyone was thirstier than before, and probably your indignant tribesmen killed you. This showed that there were Powers mightier still than the Magician. There were, therefore, gods. These gods are to have followed the customary habit of coalescing, and so by this route too you reached Monotheism.

The theory we have outlined is tidy and attractive, but here too it conflicts with facts. To prove it, you would have to find a period when there was magic and no religion; then

* I am very far indeed from mocking at magic, especially when the element of suggestion, individual or collective, is present. Much evidence that would be invaluable to science is lost, if magical practices be abolished without close investigation. There is a little—a very little—trained research going on in Africa; may it collect all possible evidence before "magic" perishes under stress of civilisation.

a transitional one, in which magic was changing into religion; and finally a period of religion with no magic, or only its decaying relics. But you can find no such thing. What you always find is, religion and magic intertwined, and it is pure begging of the question to say that the magical element came first. That is just what needs to be proved.

Indeed, that outspoken anthropologist, Dr. Schmidt of Vienna, thinks that by making use of extremely accurate and methodical research into facts alone, and starting from no theory, he can demonstrate that the tribes of the oldest cultures—that is, the nearest to the primitives—practise a very pure monotheism and a little magic, and that animism and so forth make their appearance later on. He has grouped similar existing cultures into ‘culture circles,’ and these he has arranged in their historical order; for he claims that the younger ones have proceeded from the older ones. He can thus exhibit the fact that there is *not* an identical series of changes through which *every* people *must* pass. And if I understand him right, he shows not only that Magic too predominates in the younger cycles, but that there are other signs in these, which mark degeneration.

I recognise that here too there is a danger of ‘systematisation’—there is always a terrible

temptation to find that all facts fit in with what most of them do. Still, the Lateran Museum in Rome, of which he had the arranging and is still, I think, curator, is a uniquely convincing concrete exhibition of Dr. Schmidt's ideas; whereas there is *no* evidence that a 'magical' period preceded a 'religious' one; still less, that religion grew out of magic.

It is far truer, I think, to regard religion and magic as two different attitudes towards invisible forces, due to two different and indeed antagonistic moods. This opinion was broached by a French scholar, Bouvier, before the War; but he was killed during it, and no one, I think, has worked it out since then. The one mood was submissive; the man humbled himself before the great mysteries that were beyond and above him—this was the beginning of 'worship.' In the other mood, he rose up insurgent against them, and proudly said he could coerce even them. So far as I could gather in Africa, the moods of pride, of self-elation, self-glorification, and desire for power, were *always* associated with witchcraft. Thus if a man was predominantly afraid of the gods, he would worship them; if he grew sufficiently angry with them, he might round on them, attack them, and try to conquer them

as best he could. Thus magic and religion can co-exist in one person, and display themselves alternately and even simultaneously: for a man can quite well have at one and the same time moods that are, strictly speaking, contradictory.

3

Magic, therefore, ought to be studied from a new angle, and can already be seen to be not the source of religion, but its enemy.

We particularly do not want it to be thought that we have been laughing at either the strange religions of men contemporary or in the past, cultured or uncivilised, or again at the theories which have been devised to account for the growth of various sorts of beliefs or worship. Given that all men become conscious of at least this—that they are not independent, their own makers or masters—they will want to express that somehow or other. And men's methods of self-expression can vary almost indefinitely, though, as we shall see, they tend to follow certain main lines. But we want to make two points.

The first is that totally religionless tribes are not to be found. It used to be thought that such tribes did exist. This mistake may have been due to three main causes.

The first was that explorers went out unconsciously hoping or definitely expecting to find religionless primitive tribes, because this would back, or be in accordance with, their theory that men did indeed start without any religion, but gradually acquired one. Similarly, older-fashioned missionaries often went out convinced that the pagan was 'vile' and had nothing to give, but needed only to receive. But these, on the whole, went out expecting to find 'idolators'—men worshipping sticks and stones, rather than atheists. Another cause was that such visitors arrived often very ill equipped with the native language, or having to speak wholly through an interpreter, and extremely unlikely to make their complicated questions intelligible to the bewildered Native, while on his side the Native often had a very undeveloped language which lacked words in which the questions *could* be answered. With language, of course, goes also the psychology, or mental make-up, which language expresses. Why, different classes of men in one and the self-same city think differently according to their conditions of life and express themselves differently in consequence. I think something, and tell it to so and so. In what shape does my question reach *his* mind (which may have

none of my intellectual background)? How far shall I on my side have to recast his answer till I see what really he has meant by it? Englishmen have thought differently at different times in their history, so that their turns of language too have differed. We find it hard to take a Frenchman's, a Turk's, a Hindu's 'point of view.' Yet it is hopeless to read and expect to understand any ancient book unless you can think with the mind of the writer, which is one reason why the books of the Old Testament and even the New are often so badly interpreted by people who think with modern minds and assume that those ancient writers did so too. How terribly delicate a thing it is, then, for a British student to go out to some Pacific island and expect to enter quite easily into the meaning of what a Native might say to him! Indeed, travellers are now much more careful. But we stand appalled at the airiness with which Victorian and Edwardian scholars (it was they who mostly hatched these theories) collected 'evidence' and came back and incorporated it into books. A great deal of Sir J. G. Frazer's evidence is of that sort. Take a tiny instance. An African Native once said to me that his heart was 'white.' Off his guard, a missionary might have supposed that he meant 'pure and

sinless,' and have felt pleased, or doubtful. A European might have assumed that the Native meant that in his mind he was like a white man, whatever his skin might be, and have felt flattered, or suspicious. Luckily I knew that he meant that he was pleased to see me. On our side, our minds are stocked with unnoticed metaphors, symbols, turns of talk which have become traditional, yet in themselves are meaningless (to be 'stuck-up' ; let alone 'fed up'). A friend told me that in his part of China white was worn at funerals. So a description of heaven in terms of white robes and harps would have been quite useless (whatever St. John said), because the Chinese there had no harps, and required their 'saved' to be dressed, if in anything, in yellow. So an explorer has not only to learn what a Native's mind is like, which is extremely difficult, but also to get the better of his own imaginative stock-in-trade and processes of thought, before he can make up his mind whether or no the Native believes in a God or in anything else.

The third reason is this. Very simple folks, or even very complicated ones like many native tribes, regard what is sacred as secret. Not for worlds are they going to disgorge their sacred secrets to the impertinent chance-comer. Nothing is more amusing

than to listen to a Zulu eluding even a Government clerk who is inquiring too closely into the number of his farm-stock. We in England ought to appreciate that. I remember an unknown fellow-traveller leaning across in a railway carriage, putting a damp hand on my knee, and earnestly asking : " May I inquire, sir, what are your Main Views ? " It was obvious that the other passengers felt that this was a positive indecency and very nearly blushed, and even I felt inclined to tell him to go to blazes. Why, thought I, should I be obliged to exhibit the very things that I, a sheepish Englishman, prefer to keep so wrapped up that I hardly ever look at them myself ? Anyway, the Native not only does not exhibit his spiritual wares to every inquisitive White ; he is, indeed, apt to keep them secret even from members of his own tribe till the time comes for initiation at adolescence. And, finally, the Native is often in such awe of his Supreme God that he never mentions Him even to his own mind, or but seldom. The old Roman veiled his face when praying, or even turned his head aside when he passed a mysterious god-haunted cave or wood, lest he should intrude upon the god's privacy. The Jew took every means of substituting some other term for the Name of God. Thus

the Native is in a sense apt to veil his very thoughts. His practical life is occupied with secondary, more manageable, beings like spirits. The whole trend of research is to disprove the old assertion that American, African, or Australian tribes know or have known nothing about a God.

I hope it is not too much of a digression to allude to the ever-revived theory that Fear is the origin of religion. Nearly 2000 years ago, the Roman poet said: *Primus in orbe timor fecit deos*—It was fear that first made gods in the world. And recently Lévy-Brühl, in his book *Primitives and the Supernatural*, has argued much the same thing when he displayed ‘uncivilised’ peoples (who should not, as we said, be called by the question-begging name Primitives) as moving ever under pressure of anxieties due to the Unknown, which they at once judged to be Supernatural.

We forthwith grant that such ideas of the ‘supernatural’ as men may have, can easily wrap themselves up in the emotion of fear, or rather, of awe; for sometimes the emotion is by no means unpleasant, and fear always is. But it is far too rapid an assumption to say that fear created the idea, so that the moment the Unknown is explained to me, I not only cease to fear it, but cease to believe

in it. This holds good in a fair proportion of cases. Thus if I am frightened by strange sounds, and then have their origin explained to me, I shall cease to surmise that they were made by spooks; but the validity of the notion of 'spirit' as such will not even have begun to be impugned.

In concluding this section, then, I hope to have suggested sufficiently that of the various theories we have alluded to, none explains the origin of religion, but all of them demand that the philosopher should look still farther than that sort of evidence. That sort of evidence may perhaps show why this or that group of men began to perform certain rituals, or even to entertain certain ideas *about* God, or the Supernatural, or about that Ultimate upon which they felt themselves in dependence: but not one word has so far been offered as to the reasons for or against the existence of such an Ultimate, or about its nature in itself. Let me put it thus—a simple man is so impressed by a fire, that he rapidly concludes there must be a fire-like but very mighty Cause to account for this phenomenon. He may call this God. Later, he may visit for the first time the sea, and watch a storm, and again conclude that there must be a mighty Sea-Cause, and call it, too, God. He will therefore easily think that there are two

gods, and even more, as his observation proceeds. We shall soon be able to disentangle what element in this is truly logical and valid ; and what is a side-slip in logic, as we called it. We shall not therefore at once conclude that *all* in the Native's process of reasoning was invalid, even though some of it obviously was so. So we do not disdain his conclusion that God exists, any more than we disdain the exterior rites in which he expresses that idea with the emotions attendant upon it. No one has grounds for forthwith disdaining seemingly meaningless rites. In itself, taking one's hat off when one meets a lady is meaningless ; but one ought to do it. Maori women tattoo their chins : this is said to be the conventional relic of a tattooed beard : it doesn't look any more like one than lipsticked lips look like mouths ; but the Maori shade of blue at least makes a charming contrast with coppery skins. There is no exterior expression of religion, and but few of social conventions, at which one ought merely to mock. Unless one starts with *sympathy*, there is no chance at all of ever understanding what one is studying. This is why the professional anti-religionist always fails of his objective ; and why interest flags long before you can finish a rationalist book. You realise that the author does not understand

what he is talking about, and never will nor can.

But this implies also that I must not fail in sympathy with students who in many cases are certainly barking up the wrong tree. Should an author say that men devised the idea of God because for a long time they stood on their heads, I must not yield to my first impulse and say: 'The man's an ass,' but remember that he no doubt (unlike myself) has studied the topic of men standing on their heads, and has somehow linked this up with the view that religious ideas are habitually upside-down. Well, that would be interesting, or anyway intriguing, and if the capitambulists habitually succumbed to apoplexy, that would make but a new bridge to the subject of ecstasy.

I mean that on the whole, by now, average men have become filled with a deep distrust of study-made theories, especially when departmental study (as of a group of tribes or of a set of customs) offers itself as having discovered something universal in application. Indeed, a despondency seems to have beset such students themselves: they have seen one theory after another evaporating; one key after another proving a misfit for the lock.

But the work of the greater scholars, like Tyler, Malinowski, and many another, has

been not only fascinating, but also very valuable. It has put order into *parts* of what looked liked a mere heap of ancient mouldering oddments—and oddities. It explained the reasonableness of many of those oddities, and made you think better and more kindly of the men who thought or practised them. It has shown how men, very different from ourselves, were not, for that, necessarily lunatics or vicious. Even the most frightful sexual aberrations, caught up into the religions of *e.g.* Syria or India, find an explanation, even though not their justification. Indeed, they provide a 'lesson,' though we ought not to study these topics forthwith to moralise. They showed that people who let themselves go to that sort of thing rapidly degenerated in nerve or in creative power, and indeed may have died out, or become degenerates such as one can watch to-day. It will be useful, in a later age, to see how a thing that began by a perfectly sincere misinterpretation of nature, none the less worked out badly and proved to have been anti-natural.

Another good result of these researches has been to show that things which looked somewhat like one another none the less had no causal connection with one another. We were always hearing that Christianity had borrowed many of its doctrines and all its

ritual from pagans. Now we can much more easily see that this was not so. Again, we were told that this or that sentence in a Christian document was almost identical with one in an Indian, Persian, or Chinese document. Now that complete translations are much more accessible and far more accurate, we can see, by taking stock of such documents as *wholes*, how the entire spirit and life, meaning and value, of the several documents are entirely distinct. This ability to perceive and assess the 'whole' of a thing, the interior life and controlling laws of a thing, is rare; and its work is infinitely more delicate and difficult than that which registers external similarities. There is, in short, a Science of Contrasts as well as of Similarities: and, the most important contrasts will always be interior and invisible, and not sensational or good matter for the newspapers. Much negative good work, then, has been done by the Comparative Study of Religions. It has taught us, on the whole, what we cannot say about God, and about religion and its origin. It has done little, if anything, to show us what we *can* say.

Thus we cannot, so far, say that the idea of 'God,' or of the 'soul,' is a fiction: nor that worship or (as we shall see) sacrifice in particular are *mere* survivals of an ignorant

and frightened world: nor that Christianity is merely one of a number of competing systems or sects, owing its triumph to material and accidental causes and its defeats to the true advance of physical science or psychology.

We have, for a little, to look beneath all these fascinating examples of human belief and worship, and see whether there is an element of solid value within them. If not, then we shall have to agree that the human race has within it an endemic sickness, 'religion.'

CHAPTER III

MAN'S CERTAINTIES AS TO GOD

I

THIS chapter was not meant to be long, because we said at the outset that this book is not meant to contain a philosophy of God, but was to be 'practical' in character. Still, the writer must make his position clear. He holds that men can, and should, have an intellectual knowledge, a certainty, of the existence of God, and of much that is true about His Nature. If we had to say that there was no reasonable foundation for a belief in God, or even, that it could be shown that God does not exist, then of course all these myriads of people of whom we have been thinking were wrong, under a 'strong illusion,' and believing a lie. It is part of the defined Faith of a Catholic that man can, by the use of his reason, obtain that certainty as to God's existence ; but I am not here writing as a Catholic, nor appealing to any authoritarian revelation, allegedly bequeathed to us through the Bible or in any other way ; nor even as a Christian, holding that we best derive any knowledge of God through Jesus Christ, who, he will affirm, 'revealed' God the Invisible as no one else can. I am in-

sisting that the basis for our belief in God is an intellectual one, able to generate certainty, and no mere probability.

I hold that this is quite a practical thing to do, and therefore in keeping with the character of this book. For, if the existence of God be but a probability, we cannot draw from it any of the further certainties of which we hope later on to speak ; nor can we find in anything so vague the motives which would otherwise be able to control our lives ; nor are we ever going to do or be a thousandth part of what we might, if there is but a sporting chance, as they say, of God's existing. No doubt men talk of its being a very fine thing to ' risk ' God, so to say ; and indeed to do so in either direction—either to risk God's existing, and so, to try to do what we think would please Him if He did exist ; or, at the other extreme, to lead a materialistic life and hope to square up ' afterwards.' All this matter is far too serious for us merely to ' take risks ' about it. Still less must we profess belief in God ' because, after all, you have to begin somewhere.' There is a kind of dawn of a reason here, but not a sufficient one : because while it is true we have to ' begin somewhere,' we want to know *where* ; and we might find that we are forced to begin in the middle—conscious that we are doing so,

but unable to find out anything that had gone before it. We cannot therefore just 'assume' that God exists.

Nor can we rely merely on a sentiment, an emotion. People sometimes say, "Don't you sometimes feel God very near you?" "Don't you feel that God answers your prayers?" Well, often the sincere answer would be, "No, I don't. I don't even know what you are talking about." I think that on the whole most men have experienced what might be called a 'religious emotion'; perhaps in their impressionable youth; or when they have been desperately happy; or grateful; or even relieved because they had escaped from a danger or disaster. But everyone knows that it becomes more and more difficult to 'recapture' the effervescences of youth: an artificially frothed-up emotion is a definitely harmful thing, with its special reactions: even emotional religious services may be, and in fact usually are, bad for those who attend them, as the aftermath of 'revival' services constantly shows. I am not at all denying that religious emotions exist, and can have their value, and may be true 'touches' of God upon the soul; and the sense of the Presence of God, in its varying degrees or kinds, is a great gift both while it exists and afterwards. But all such

things should come second (we are not forgetting abrupt conversions): they arrive, and they pass. That great ecstatic St. Teresa acknowledged that after even the greatest of her 'experiences' she could hardly realise that she had ever had them. She insisted that she would sacrifice even the sublimest of them for the sake of doing one act of ordinary virtue. When dying, she felt herself a sinner, and drew her comfort from the fact that she died a faithful daughter of the Church. In a word, emotions fade out even as they flare up; what you are seeking is something that shall hold true in the blackest or dullest hours: you do not want to 'believe' because you *remember* something that you experienced: it is almost impossible to judge of the real nature and origin of our experiences of a subjective and emotional sort: and you want to be able to help those who confess, as I said, that they have never had any. We would like to insert two reminders. We are not denying (as must be clear) what is called 'mystical experience,' and we may have something to say about it below; but, on the one hand, it ought to be very accurately defined, else it can be made to mean almost anything: and, on the other, while it is clear that psychologists are far from dismissing it in the airy way that used

to be theirs, and equating it with hysteria or what not, they are in an exceptionally difficult position in regard of it, if they profess not to have shared in any such experience themselves. It must be very difficult for a man blind from birth to attach any meaning to 'colour.' I am told that some such men 'get' colour in terms of sound. They feel in the presence of scarlet that they cannot see, as if they heard a loud noise of some kind. This may not be true; but it remains that 'mystical experiences' being by definition something different from ordinary knowledge, it is very difficult for a man who has had none but ordinary knowledge to judge of them. Still, being realities, they have to be taken into account when studying human nature. No item of evidence may be omitted.

The next point is, that very many men and women—an increasing number, I think—experience very acutely the sense of a *lack* of God and a need of God. The world seems to them so chaotic, and their own well-being so precarious—many are so unsure even of next week's job, that they simply long for some certainty to hang on to. That human life cannot properly be lived without some such certainty, is quite a reasonable ground for hunting optimistically *for* such a certainty.

Few are willing to sit down to the admission that the whole of life is a bad farce, has no meaning, leads nowhere. Few are willing to accept the bleak statement that "it will be progressively less farcical so far as the human race goes: true, *you* have no serious prospect of a better time; but you are building up fine things for your posterity." Well, apart from the fact that history shows no hint at all of the human race, as such, thus improving (we have already said that: degeneration exists; everything has flowered and faded, so far as civilisation is concerned), a man may well be forgiven for asking why on earth he should sacrifice himself, or submit to being sacrificed, for a problematical posterity? He wants to feel that there is at least some sort of 'order' here and now into which he can insert himself, and not be wasted, and not have to think that his wife and children (if he dares to have any) are being wasted; and that if the 'event' be far off, towards which he is told that he is working, he shall be at least to some degree conscious of it. It really is not good enough to be told that someone some day may be thinking one's noble thoughts, transmitted who knows how—and that in this sense one survives, and that in this alone one's self-sacrifices have been implemented. On the other hand, we have

no right at all to say that something will be so, merely because we would wish it to be so.

In this section we wish to spend still less time over showing why we can think rightly about God, and again, why people (as we saw) have often thought wrongly. We have to assume that the mind is a proper instrument for arriving at truth; for, if what we *cannot help thinking cannot help being illusory or false*, there is no use either in thinking or in arguing. I will just recall that even in propounding the opinion: "My mind is not a fit instrument for reaching truth," a man would belie himself. For he is using that very instrument—his mind—for reaching that opinion. It is to return once more to the position of that Cretan who said that all Cretans were liars. If he told the truth, they were not. And so forth. If I say: "My mind cannot reach the truth; and this is a truth," then I am equivalently saying that my mind *can* reach the truth, and I refute my own argument.

Well, our mind clearly indicates to us the fact that all things whereof we have cognisance are *dependent*. We depend for our physical existence on our parents. Any

'made' object depends on its maker. Now we can 'think-together' all dependent things, past, present, or to be, and call them 'The Dependent,' just as we can think-together all men, and call them Mankind. But The Dependent, by the very force of the word, depends on something, else it would not be dependent. And that something cannot itself be dependent on anything, else it would simply fall back into the stock of the Dependent and be part of it, and we should have to begin all over again. 'Dependent' in the long run necessarily involves 'Independent,' just as 'son' involves 'father.' There is, therefore, an Independent Existence, on which all else depends. The mind cannot think it otherwise. All that is dependent depends in the long run wholly on an Independent.

I know that this sort of argument, and this argument itself, are apt to be mocked at ; but I cannot see why, save by those who maintain, as I said, that the mind cannot get at *fact*, and may be as wrong as it is right in its essential processes. And indeed, as a simple argument, it is coming back into its own. Few have the temerity to deny all causation, or to repeat that though the mind cannot help thinking in terms of cause and effect, there are really no such things, or may not be. But

this consideration has a double value. First, it really does get right back to the roots of existence—far beyond subordinate or departmental things, like the origin of religions. Moreover, it starts from observation quite as much as do any of the sciences. If it leads back to a Truth that we cannot observe, so do they all. Second, it lies at the back of many another argument maybe more picturesque and impressive to the imagination, such as, that Order exists in the universe, an Order being intelligible (at least to some extent) to ourselves, and so having its rise in intelligence. However much the Order in things has been mocked at—someone once said he could make a much better eye than ours—anyway, there is *an* Order, and without any order an eye would not so much as begin to be good. (And anyway—*could* he? No man can make anything: he can only rearrange things. And could he even rearrange what exists, so as to produce even the rottenest living eye? And how does anyone know that any eye would be more suitable than ours for *our* purposes? A fly's eye suits a fly, but would not suit ourselves.) There is, therefore, an Order in things, or no one could study anything. But an order depending on an Orderer is only a departmental aspect of the Dependent depending on an Independent,

what they used (quite properly) to call the First Cause, un-Caused.

Moreover, it is precisely the Evolutionist who has to maintain most hotly that there is an Order in things, and, what is more, an order-in-motion. In a word, an evolutionary one. Not only is there an order, but things move into it and towards it. Useless to say that they do not always do so. Nothing can be more orderly than a current in water ; but it moves with all sorts of little back-washes, eddies, flattenings out and disappearance of eddies ; and anyone who knew exactly the volume of the water moving, the various gradients, and the obstacles to the motion, and no doubt the attractions of ' heavenly bodies,' could tell you exactly why the progress of the river was what it was, and in every detail. Observe that everybody save the man who can get back to the original cause has to begin in the middle. He has to ' accept ' things, and moving things, and things moving in particular directions and becoming what they were not. If he wants to go any farther back (as all who seek God do wish), he must get back to that Independent which is not only a First Cause, but what Aristotle called the First Mover ; an active Cause, and an orderly and ordering Cause. All this fact of motion and rhythm

and tendency in things has always fascinated me. The very likelihood that the order and the rhythm may be 'disguised' adds to the fascination of discovery. There is no geometrical order in a living tree (as there is, after a fashion, in a Noah's Ark tree, or any 'stylised' living object): but how perfect is its balance, how constant within limits is its rhythm! Watch a water-fall: it does not 'fall'; the water comes over in a series—tress above tress, fleece over fleece. All motion, however, is a change from some degree of not-being into being, and as such requires a cause, since what was not could not cause itself. So here, too, we return to the argument from causality, and to the First Cause un-Caused.

To this Necessary Being, then, the Name of God is given by us. Notice, we do not first decide what 'God' is or ought to be if He is to satisfy our taste, but by applying our reason to the data of experience (limited dependent things, all of them effects) we get back to a certain primal Being, and it is to this that we give that Name, and we give it to nothing else. You might say: "Well, why not call it X, if we know nothing more about it than that it is the necessary un-Caused Cause?" Certainly we might call it X, if that gave us any satisfaction. 'God' is, after all, but a word in the

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English language. But we should not call It 'X,' as though that is *all* we can *know* about it. We can know much more.

First, if you think it out, you see that what is Independent must be Infinite. It is easy to see that what is dependent must be limited, if only because it is not its own cause. And what is limited, depends on what limits it. The ideas of limitedness and dependence go necessarily together. Absolute Independence necessarily excludes limitation. We must therefore say of God not only that He necessarily exists, but also that He is infinite, and, further, that He is One, or, more properly, unique. For there cannot be two Infinities. If there were, each would have its own selfhood, at any rate, and the other would not have *that* ; so neither would be infinite. Now, the Infinite must be omnipresent, which does not mean 'in' every place, nor even all-pervasive, so to say, like water in a sponge, but in no sense limited by space ; and again, Eternal, which does not mean lasting very long, but wholly unlimited by time. Of God, then, it must be said that He necessarily exists, is Infinite, One, Eternal, and outside of any limit whatsoever.

We may forthwith recognise that many a man might exclaim that if *that* is what God is, he himself has no possible use for so mathe-

matical, diagrammatic a God ; that he would far rather have a human friend than *that* ; and also, that he can make nothing of what we have been saying and doesn't believe that anyone else can, and, in short, that it is absurd to suppose that the human mind can understand such a God ; there must be a certain proportion between one's mind and what it seeks to know, and that it is quite useless even to try to imagine this infinite omnipresent yet wholly invisible God.

We answer to this, first, that we acknowledge, as Christians, that the way in which *we* are meant to ' see ' and to ' know ' God is through Jesus Christ. " God no man hath seen ever : Jesus Christ . . . He hath made Him manifest " (see 1 Jn. i.). But this book confessedly does not appeal to Christianity nor to Christ. Not all readers will be Christians ; for many, such an appeal would be valueless. And, anyhow, you can hardly be a Christian unless you first believe in God. At least logically God comes first in everything ; true, it might be shown that Jesus Christ is so absolutely ' convincing ' that we believe in God because *He* believed in God ; but, after all, that is not how we were asked to write ; and it is perfectly legitimate to see what our naked minds, so to say, can make of the subject.

Second, we remind readers that we have not yet said all that we propose to say, from the standpoint of sheer reason, about God, but are forthwith addressing ourselves to an objection that might very likely come up in a man's mind at this point, and haunt and worry him so that he could hardly even attend to anything that will follow.

But third, we have to say what certainly is not easily grasped by those who are not accustomed to think laboriously about this subject. It is this—There is no question of knowing God as we know, for instance, our fellow-man. We know our fellow-man as we do because he is at least the same sort of creature as we ourselves are. But we are not of the same *sort* as God. In fact, in regard of God, the word 'sort' cannot be mentioned, for He is, as we said, 'unique.' We know God, as St. Paul said, 'by means of a mirror, dimly'; we see Him reflected, 'expressed,' in His works: Himself we do not see, directly, at all. We see Him, perhaps, as we 'see' an artist in his works: the author in his books. We 'feel we have met him,' we feel we know exactly 'what spirit he is of.' But the picture is paint on canvas; the novel is print on paper: *he* is a man of flesh and blood. Therefore to the man who says that he cannot 'comprehend' God, we say: "Of

course you can't. None but God can adequately comprehend Himself. Only the Infinite can grasp the Infinite. If you *could* comprehend God, you would yourself be God."

But we can have a truthful *human* knowledge of God. Truthful; and human. This is called having an 'analogical' knowledge of God. The word means that there is a true proportion between our knowledge of God, and God. A proportion, or ratio, not of amount (as though I could know God about half as well as He knows Himself, and could, by practice, get to know Him three-quarters as well), but of *kind*. All my knowledge of anything is drawn from experience, and is, like myself, limited and derived. But God is essentially infinite and un-derived. Take an example.

I take a map of Switzerland, and say, "This is Switzerland." But it is nothing of the sort. It is a map. Yet it can tell me any amount *about* Switzerland: the relation of its mountains and rivers; the 'why' of the emplacement of its towns; the best ways of moving around and the reason why they are best, and it can, in short, give me a great deal of perfectly true and invaluable practical information about Switzerland. This is rather like what philosophy and theology can do for

me in regard of God. They can give me ideas that are true, though probably very abstract and uninspiring, about God, just as the map can about Switzerland, though it cannot give me the faintest hint of the beauties of Switzerland.

Now take picture post-cards, coloured. Crude as they will be they will show me snowy peaks rose-red in the sunset, bitterly blue in glacier-shadows ; deep green pine-woods, misty waterfalls, and tawny chalets. They correspond fairly well to emotional sermons about God ; they may make me want to go to Switzerland, whereas the map would help me to see what to do if I went to Switzerland but might not make me want to go there at all. Such a map looks more like a collection of squirming furry caterpillars than anything else. Yet if, on the strength of the postcards, I went to Switzerland for a walking-tour, but had no map, I should get in a bad mess and waste a lot of time and miss a great deal.

Best of all, of course, is actually to live in Switzerland, complete with map in my hand, and able to dispense with postcards, having now got the real thing. And best of all is to live in communion with God, 'needing not that any man should tell me,' because my mind is properly educated in His regard and I know the truth about Him so well that I have hardly

to reflect on it at all. It has become part and parcel of me. Thus if I have come to love and be happy in the company of my parents, I do not need to reflect that they stinted themselves to give me a good education, or the like, though in moments when I am irritated with them and apt to be unkind, that is a very good thing to recall to my memory. "You little oaf! Remember what they sacrificed for your sake, and try to behave decently!" Thus may one discipline oneself.

There is, therefore, a truthful knowledge of God possible to us, which is invaluable, and practical in the extreme, as we hope to show in the second part of this book. And it is doubly valuable when we have no 'feel' of God at all, as well we may not have, from time to time. The soul often goes into a tunnel. But it is not theology that will save a soul. To know the truth about God is not the same as knowing God. And at the end even of this chapter we hope to indicate how to make a start, anyway, towards doing exactly that. It is part of the Christian revelation that men's souls in heaven 'see God as He is,' 'face to face'; we shall 'know Him even as we are known,' *i.e.* directly, by vision, and not reflected in created things—not even merely in our own thoughts: but that consummation is not yet achieved (and even

when it is, we shall not 'comprehend' the Infinite), and the most we can say is that we can possess a true, yet human—*i.e.* analogical—knowledge of God in this life.

A brief paragraph about 'imagination.' People often say they cannot imagine God, and so feel *as if* they could not 'know' anything about Him. Both parts of this are a mistake. You can imagine God in a score of ways—the Hebrews pictured Him as a warrior, or as a very aged man : the Egyptians in very many other ways, *e.g.* a snake with its tail in its mouth was an imaginative symbol of eternity. But the intelligence rapidly corrects these pictures, which may or may not be useful to the man who possesses them. But God *is* not any one of these things ; He is not an aged man, nor a snake, nor any limited and created thing. Even a young boy can easily be taught that a circle *is* not a chalk line drawn on a blackboard, with a dot for the 'centre.' That curving line is nothing like a circle in reality, but it helps the imagination, and so fixes the attention on the subject, until the boy becomes a true mathematician and then, the less he uses his imagination the better. Probably as people become holier, they cease almost altogether to 'imagine' God. But it is absurd to suppose that unless you can imagine a thing, you can know nothing about it. If

that were so, the less our mathematician used his imagination, the worse mathematician he would become, which is the opposite of the truth. I *can* therefore imagine God in all sorts of ways ; and I am right in doing so if it helps me, but no longer than that. I can and do know much about Him which, precisely in proportion as I know Him better, passes altogether out of the realm of imagination. Thus to attempt to imagine God's eternity, or spirituality, or omnipresence, would probably be more misleading than helpful, at any rate nowadays.

We now pass forward—not indeed towards ‘humanising’ God, but towards showing that He is, and must be, that with which not only our knowledge but also our feelings can, in their manner and measure, correspond. I mean, for example, that a God who knew nothing about me, or made mistakes about me, or were powerless in my regard, or were not interested in me, or were actually malignant, would be a God of whom I might be frightened, whom I should resent, whom certainly I should refuse to worship ; whom, in short, I should cut out of my life so far as possible.

We recall what we said about God being the infinite First Cause, un-Caused. Now observe that every effect must be 'in' its cause in the way suited to that cause. Thus if my pen makes red-ink marks on my paper, it had to have red ink in it. That is a clumsy example. But take a portrait. That portrait had to be in the mind of its artist, else it would never have appeared upon the canvas. The actual paints had to be in the artist's brush; but the portrait had to be in his mind, though not in terms of paint. In terms of Mind. As a thought. Therefore an effect has to be in its cause in the way suited to that cause. Now, we are aware in ourselves of a certain amount of intelligence, else we could neither write a book nor read it. (Probably the author, and even the reader, are at least now and then conscious of how limited their intelligence is; still, there they are!) In God, therefore, cause of intelligence also, Intelligence must exist; but, in the way suited to God. That is, underived; and infinite. God does not draw His knowledge, as we do, from all manner of sources: nor does He need to reason, as we do, 'putting two and two together' and making deductions. Being infinite, He cannot lack anything nor depend on anything. We have to say, therefore, that God is All-Knowing, All-

Wise. We shall see, below, what follows from this and the next two Attributes.

We are also aware that we have in us a certain amount of power—this in particular is limited; there are far more things that we cannot do than those that we can. Still, we 'can' quite a number of things: we can even say: "*I will* do so and so." Enough, now, to say that this 'effect,' power, must be in the First Cause of all things, as in its source, and infinitely. God must therefore be called All-Powerful: All-Mighty.

Last, God is All-Good. This topic is liable to defeat all who will not trouble to put their minds really hard 'at' God, or even at the nature of any fact in life. But we should be doing the greatest disservice to our readers if we omitted this part of our book and merely romanced, so to say, about God's goodness, love, and loveliness. Ask yourselves what 'badness' is. You will always find it to be the lack of something that ought to be present for the perfection of a thing. Not merely the absence of just anything (a third eye, for example, is lacking to me, but human nature is not at present arranged in view of three eyes per person); but, of something that ought to be there if the thing is to be good of its sort (my two eyes lack all sorts of things that they 'ought' to have if they were good

of their sort). An apple is called bad, from the point of view of eating, either if, first, it as yet lacks juice, sweetness, etc. ; or again if it no more possesses the gases which made it firm, pleasant to look at and to taste, and so forth. In the one case it is unripe ; in the second it is rotten. But in all cases its chemical constituents are perfectly good, and so are the processes of its change. If I cut a man's throat skilfully, the razor (presumably) was good of its sort ; all my muscular activities were good of their sort ; my eye was good ; the action, as an action, was done ' well.' But there was lacking a whole series of elements that ought to have existed as between man and man ; a social order of mind and will was lacking. The murder was evil because of many a spiritual fact that ought to have been present and were not. In marriage and in adultery an identical act is performed : the former is good, because a due spiritual order between husband and wife is preserved : in the latter all this is lacking. Here, once more, it is enough to say, first, that if you really study the problem of evil, you will find the above to hold universally and necessarily true. There is no such thing as positive ' evil.' *All* ' badness ' is a ' privation.' But, second, in the Infinite there can be no gap, lack, or privation of any

sort. Therefore in God there can be no 'evil.' Therefore God is All-Good.

It is of the highest possible importance to lay hold of this intellectually undefeatable truth. For human experience provides us with a thousand imaginative experiences which suggest that God is helpless, indifferent, or malicious. What we have said above *necessitates* God's being All-Good. Anything that conflicts, or seems to conflict, with this, cannot be true. What presents itself to me as wrong, either is not really so or owes its wrongness to something that is not God; for example, the human will choosing against right knowledge. *i.e.* sinning, doing a wrong act of which the consequences produce yet further 'disorderly' results. We shall say briefly below why God does not coerce free human will: but we have to insist, especially just here, on doing exactly the opposite to what our fellow-countrymen prefer to do. They like looking at exterior events or people; they detest thinking really hard. So they will always prefer to watch the human theatre and the dramas enacted there, and to say, "I see, on the whole, tragedies. A good God could not permit that. Therefore there is no God, or, He doesn't know about it; or, He can't stop it; or, He won't stop it." But they have become

quite unaccustomed to thinking hard about *God*; if they did, they would see that it is *impossible* that God should be anything but All-Powerful, All-Wise, and All-Good; and, in fact, All-Loving.

This All-Lovingness of God follows directly from His All-Goodness. What really is love? No sensible man continues to mistake the frothing-up of his emotions for real love, however much he may think it was at first. Love may well be associated with the emotions, but need not be. You could truly love someone while you were being sea-sick, but you most certainly would not be feeling any raptures over her even if you were on your honeymoon. Love means Good Will towards so and so—among us humans, Will so good as to be prepared even for self-sacrifice. If God is Infinite Power and Infinite Goodness (as we have seen that He is), He must be of infinitely good will towards all that is. That is, He loves it infinitely. I agree, unless we can pass into Christianity we have no evidence that God's love for man can be thought of as in the region of self-sacrifice. The whole of this book we, as Christians, acknowledge, is incomplete. If, as the Christian holds, the only adequate way of knowing God at all is through Christ, beyond all else the best way of realising God's

love for men is the History of Christ. But to *that* we are not appealing in these pages, and, in consequence, feel ourselves in many ways hampered and imprisoned. But, even so, we think it right not to begin in the middle—well, that is not quite accurate: Christ is the Christian's Centre, and not a 'middle' in the sense of being half-way between two things. I would far rather try to exhibit God as He was 'in Christ,' than spend time philosophising about God. But that does not even begin to show that the Philosophy of God is useless. Far better begin with even the most arid doctrine about God, than to begin with a 'pathetic' preaching of Christ among men who might neither begin nor end with any clear doctrine about God. "That they may *know Thee*, the only True GOD"—that is the primary object for which Christ was sent into our world.

If even now it seems impossible to suppose that we could ever come to 'react' to such a God as we are told that we should do—that is, with love—we might remind ourselves that there are certainly men in the world who hate Him. What can inspire hate, can certainly provoke a *strong* reaction; and therefore the reaction of intense love is thinkable. We are not, then, surprised when people who can believe very strongly and

sacrifice themselves heroically for spiritual things, like the Spaniards, can also do the exact opposite—disbelieve most violently, and hate what other people believe in, and want savagely to destroy it.

This is very unlike our English atheism. First, very many people who call themselves 'atheist' are really agnostic, do not firmly believe anything themselves, but are not prepared to go to extremes to prevent others believing in what they like. In my boyhood, there was plenty of atheist literature, but it occupied itself chiefly in mocking at the Old Testament presentation of Jehovah—or what was in reality a caricature of that presentation. I remember 'comic' illustrated Old Testaments, in which not so much *God* as what the authors chose to assert the Jews thought about God, was caricatured. This may have been largely due to the English religion having become, since our great religious revolutions, increasingly Old Testament and un-Christian. The other item that the 'atheists' attacked was again not *God*, but the Established Church, which even then was regarded as a bloatedly rich institution, battenning on tithes and what not, and careless of the working-man. It was also attacked by Nonconformists, savagely jealous of its social eminence. Clergymen,

churchwardens, business men, and so forth, were pictured as sitting upon money-bags and having a good time at the expense of the average man. They were lumped in, at that time, with 'lords,' who were supposed to do the same. But this was, and is, totally unlike continental Atheism.

The main reason for this unlikeness is that in countries where the Catholic Faith has prevailed, so has a very definite and articulated doctrine which contains two fundamental principles. The first is, that God alone is absolute; and the second is, that the individual is of incalculable value, being rational, capable of virtue, immortal, equal before God, having many a right, chiefly that of completing himself within an inviolable family and possessing property such as should not injure his neighbour, and of forming associations, of living in peace and unity with all men in a true society, and of so living that he might die a good death and be eternally happy in heaven. It is easily seen that wherever the State wishes to be Absolute, there is always the likelihood that it will descry in the expression of any one of these beliefs an infringement of its claims. Briefly, the believer is liable at any moment to say that God and his conscience forbid him to do what the State commands, and that he is

willing to give up every earthly enjoyment for the sake of heavenly joy, mortal life included. This has been the origin of practically all persecutions of the Church by the State, which may indeed reach as far as blood-martyrdom, or may go no farther than a progressive imprisonment and suffocation of the Church by Governments (which can as well be monarchic as republican or communist, and indeed be ticketed Catholic no less than atheist, if they but aim at absolutism). There are three grades or phases of this method. The first is the creation of Concordats, which the Church—ruefully on the whole—accepts, and which have usually involved her doing her work in shackles. The second is the implementing of the theory that religion may indeed survive, provided it concerns itself exclusively with heaven, and admits that everything which happens upon earth is the affair of the State alone. The third is the endeavour to eliminate religion altogether. How the theories are put into practice depends on the temperament of the people concerned: there will always be, however, common to all methods, the element of Force. You will find that this holds good for almost any period in the past, and it is loudly proclaimed as true to-day.

We have not, of course, discussed a score

of subordinate reasons for religious persecutions, but we have indicated a constant. You will always find present the element I have assigned. You may also find worldliness and inertia in the Church, which positively invites reform, nor have Saints ever been lacking to initiate and carry forward that reform. You will also find a positive hatred of God and of Christ so maniac as to cause the present writer, at any rate, to seek its origin in a spiritual world of evil which used (rightly) to be described as 'the Devil and all his Angels.' But to insist on that is not part of the purpose of this book. Enough to have said that what we perceive 'abroad' and not here is largely due to Latins and Jews being logical (which we are not), and to southern or eastern temperaments being less 'tame' than ours, though I imagine that passion, should it once get out of hand, would blaze as brutally among ourselves as it does elsewhere.

4

Returning to what is more palatable, we conclude the first part of this book by mentioning 'Prayer.' Prayer is nothing more or less than the deliberate turning of the mind and will to God in goodness. It demands

neither formula nor even word for its existence, let alone its perfection. It is the free self-orientation of the soul towards God in almost any way other than rebelliousness, though to curse a God you believe in is an inverted prayer. By the use of the word 'will,' above, I meant to exclude mere thinking about God, such as a theologian at his studies might provide. The will is involved in prayer ; indeed, almost more than thought ; since you can 'adhere' with all your strength to God, without thinking very much, or at all. You can pray strongly when far too tired to think ; and God may give you graces which cause the soul to operate on a plane higher than that of explicit reflection, reasoning, or deliberate thought.

But can any of this, in reality, take place ? It follows of necessity from what we have said above. First, God is not absent. There can be no question of straining one's eyes to see Him behind the clouds, or of shouting so as to make Him hear. He is 'omnipresent.' The Hebrew knew this and stated it again and again in unphilosophic terms.

Whither should I go from Thy Spirit ?

Or whither fly from Thy gaze ?

Should I climb up to the skies—Thou art there !

Should I lie down in the abysses—there art Thou !

Should I take to myself the wings of the dawn,
 And alight on the uttermost of the sea,
 Even there would Thine hand lay hold on me—
 Would Thy right hand grasp me.
 Should I say: "Maybe the dark might cover me!
 And let the only light around me be the night!"
 Ah! to Thee darkness is not dark! The night is as
 clear as the day!
 To Thee, darkness is but light!

Mine inmost self is in Thy power;
 From my mother's womb hast Thou woven me
 together . . .
 My very bones were not hidden from Thee
 That Thou didst form in secret—
 My warp and my woof
 In the heart of the world.
 While I was yet unformed, Thine eyes beheld me,
 In Thy book every day was registered—
 Yes, my days were being formed
 Though no man yet existed.—Ps. cxxxix. 7-16.*

I can recall no passage in any ancient literature which approaches this for intensity of realisation of God's omnipresence and omniscience. Anything that at first sight

* In quotations from the Scriptures, no special version will be followed. We try to provide the maximum of the meaning with the minimum of alteration of familiar renderings. 'The heart of the world' is parallel to the 'hidden place' mentioned just before, and means the mother's womb. 'The depths of the earth' has here no other signification.

seems similar to it will be found to be pantheistic; the spiritual flavours have to be carefully discerned. The upshot is, that there can at least be no difficulty about prayer due to some sort of absence or distance of God. 'Nearer art Thou than breathing—closer than hands and feet.'

And since God is infinite in His essence, and therefore, in all His Perfections, He is All-Aware, His Knowledge can have no gaps in it; He cannot be inattentive. Who does not remember the ferocious irony of Elijah, when no answer came to the priests of Baal who went howling and hobbling round their altar, gashing themselves with knives? "Cry loudly! Is he not a god? Perhaps he is thinking about something else . . . or gone to his privy, or he is on a journey, and possibly asleep and must be awakened!" (I Kings xviii. 27). And contrast the hymn of the weary caravan (Ps. cxxi. ; Vg. 120), which prayed :

"May He not give thy foot to stumbling!

May the Guardian-God not slumber!"

"Nay! neither slumbers He nor sleeps He—
Israel's Guardian!"

Even when asleep, the faithful soul—and all souls—are watched over by the ever-wakeful Sentinel. Even as the sun should

not strike them in the day-time, so neither should the moon by night.*

And Psalm cxxvii., insisting on the necessity of a divine 'implementing' of all human efforts, insists too that it is futile *without* that implementing to arise so early and go to sleep so late—God can give to His beloved the bread they toil for, even while they sleep. (This, I may say, while not in the least deprecating external human endeavour, indirectly justifies prayer, which can be a great interior effort indeed, but is anyway interior and looks to the alien eye as no more productive than sleep does. We shall have to return to the topic of prayer; meanwhile enough to say that nothing can be said against Prayer on the grounds that God is somehow inaccessible, or unaware.)

Nor, in the All-Good, is there any possibility of ill-will, or even of indifference. "I know the thoughts that I think towards you," saith the Lord: "thoughts of peace, and not of evil. . . . And you shall call upon Me, and you shall go and pray to Me, and I will hearken unto you. And you shall seek

* Arabs still think that the moon can give you leprosy. I think this must be an impression due to the blanching effect of fierce oriental moonlight, and the leprous whiteness. We still talk about 'moonstruck,' and 'lunatic.'

Me, and find Me, when you shall seek for Me with all your heart—and I will be found by you!" (Jer. xxix. 11-13): "Ah! I have loved thee with an everlasting love!" (xxxix. 3). Until the sinner becomes, as it were, identified with Sin, God cannot but love him, and always does He love him. Therefore neither on the side of the Will of God is any rejection of the Prayer and his prayer possible. "What to pray, and how," St. Paul was to say (Romans viii. 26), "we know not." But he continued to write that the Spirit of God Himself joins hands with this our weakness, praying *inside* our prayer with an intense prayer of His own which had no need of words: "And God, who scrutinises hearts—who sees what is truly innermost in them—far deeper than even the consciousness of the man can be aware of—knows what is the meaning of the Spirit."

The point is this: it is hardly possible to suppose that the man who keeps himself, his mind and will, *away* from God, and never puts himself so far as he can into any chosen contact with Him, *can* learn much about God. It is true that God always and necessarily takes the initiative, and is soliciting the soul to turn to Him: hence I fear there is never an *absolute* unawareness of God; there must be some infinitesimal measure

of rejection of His further invitations. But it is never for man's eye to judge of this; *we* have no idea at all of what God may be desiring from this man in particular here and now: it remains that if the Love of God *does* win any response from a man, His own response is incalculably greater than his is, and any 'prayer' is sure of its answer. I trust, therefore, that readers who feel that they can in *any sense* 'pray,' should do so, however little their prayer seems to fit in with 'prayer-book prayers.' I have even known men pray for help to commit what was, as a matter of fact, a sin. But they did not think it was one. It *was* one; but they did not think it was. The most important element in this was, that they prayed. The world of men falls into two parts—those who pray, somehow and somewhen, and those who never do. But, then, who does not, in some sense, and at some crises? Men who proclaim they have 'no religion,' will pray like anything if their wife is dying. You could put this down—no doubt rightly, up to a point—to selfish desperation. If you did not know whether there was a God or not you might be left wondering what possible use such a 'prayer' could be. But once you know, with your intelligence, that there *is* a God—an almighty God, an all-

aware God, a God of infinite good will—it stands to reason that He cannot be unconscious of this desperate, maybe foolish, possibly blasphemous prayer; He understands it; He makes every allowance for it; He knows this, at any rate—that a man has put himself into touch with Him; is groping after Him, if haply he might find Him (cf. Acts xv. 27); is in some wild way appealing to Him; and to such an appeal God will certainly not be deaf.

A last point. 'The pure in heart,' said our Lord, 'shall *see God*.' If, then, you feel that at least you are conscious of a 'better' and 'worse' lying open to your choice, even though your idea of what is good or bad does not at all square with what you think conventional morality demands, and if you courageously do choose what you hold to be the better even though it be also the harder (and especially when it is), God will begin to illuminate Himself before your mind and in your heart. I am not in the least offering for admiration the honest, good-hearted sinner of the novels, 'so much preferable to the black-coated hypocrite or the bitter Puritan,' and so forth. I am saying that God gives to all men a certain amount of light, and knowledge of better and worse, and that a conscience can be very 'uneducated,' but none

the less exist. Exactly in proportion as a man honestly lives according to *that*, his mind becomes clearer both as to good and evil and as to God. There are two ancient Catholic phrases that encourage us here. 'Grace waits upon—adapts itself to—Nature'; and: 'To him who does what is in him, God denies not Grace.' Let us not define accurately here what we mean by 'Grace.' Enough to think of it as the Help of God. God, then, we hold, when helping a man helps him not just anyhow, but according to his temperament, his stock of ideas and ideals; God takes hold of the living germ and tries to develop it. And the moment there is even the faintest response in the man, new help reaches him.

We conclude therefore this rather arid first part of our book by recalling that in proportion as a man tries to do right, and prays, he will begin to 'see God' and to know what is true about Him and appreciate it. We hope now to pick up, as it were, elements to which we have already referred, and to seek from them that consolation and invigoration which in our anxious and disheartened generation we so gravely need.

CHAPTER IV

GOD PARAMOUNT

I

WE must begin this second part, in which, please God, real motives for encouragement and, as we said, a true invigoration are to be found, with the very definite affirmation of what the modern age detests—namely, the duty of our absolute self-humiliation before God. There used to be a coarse, yet childish, habit among popular atheist preachers of calling upon God, if any, to strike the speaker dead within so many minutes. Watch in hand, the speaker stood upon his platform, spoke blasphemies against God, and then defied the Almighty to retaliate. We think that these vulgarities are affairs of the past, at any rate in this country. But in the last century there was a real tendency to exalt human nature at the expense of God—I do not mean in the old licentious way more suited to the Renaissance, when the flesh was adored together with its lusts. I mean, that people said that it was a *bad thing* to be humble or to humble yourself. They resented bitterly an expression like St. Peter's—"Humble yourselves beneath the mighty hand of God" (I Peter v. 6); or the words

of St. Paul (Phil. iii. 21) “ (He) shall transform the body of our lowliness . . . according to that mighty working whereby He can indeed subordinate all things to Himself.” Mrs. Humphry Ward actually wrote a whole book, *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, contrasting the Roman Catholic squire, who was always reading the *Imitation*, with the free-minded agnostic daughter of the Cambridge scientist, who held her head so high. Mrs. Ward was perfectly livid with her dislike of a religion which reminded Mr. Helbeck that he was ‘dust and ashes.’ Paradoxically, the girl committed suicide, and the man remained in possession of his soul.

Yet man is no absolute master of his soul. He did not make himself; he does not preserve himself; he can discover many things about matter and even mind, but never can defy the laws inherent in them without bringing down everything, himself included, in ruin. Even the artist does not really create. He can perceive, as others cannot, what there *is in* creation, and can reveal it. He can elicit it, but he does not put it there.

But if anything that we have said above is true, as we firmly hold it to be, we perceive that not only are we not absolute masters of created things, but that we with them share the very fact of having been created, and of

being preserved. We have not the source of existence in ourselves : God is that Source. We are in a thousand ways limited. God is the Infinite. We hold nothing at all that is in ourselves *from* ourselves, neither at our origin, nor at any moment of our existence. Nothing but the will of God can at any such moment be providing us with being. At this moment, I am the term of God's Will. The whole of God—if I may so put it—is intent upon me, that I may *be*. As in the line of knowledge the realisation of the absolute dependence of all things on an Absolute Independent must come first, so in the line of will my complete self-subjection to God must come first. Else there is no order left at all. I cannot think anything true unless my mind derives its knowledge from Him ; nor do anything right unless what I do be in keeping with His will.

Now, does this reduce me to a state of fear—almost of panic ? and to a state of apathy, almost of inertia ? We shall see that it does the exact opposite. Yet are we not always being exhorted to ' fear ' God ? Does that not, in effect, turn my religion into an affair of fear ?

There is an essential difference between fear and fright ; between awe and reverence, and terror. One *ought* to stand in awe of

what is 'above' one—I don't mean merely bigger or stronger than one is oneself. But even natural beauty, being a perfection that in its highest forms has often caused even modern men almost to worship it, deserves our reverence. To my feeling, when flamboyant advertisements disfigure a mountain-side, a lovely harbour, or a field, a desecration has been involved. One has a shameful sense of indecency. It is very good to stand humble and awestruck even before a beautiful line of poetry, and it disgusts one if it be parodied, or if a really beautiful picture be caricatured. What is aged or ancient has at least a kind of *a priori* claim to reverence: it is rather tragic that while an ancient inanimate object is nearly always beautiful because of the glamorous patine that has settled down upon it, it is never 'crude'—aged human persons don't always 'implement' such a claim: they fail to do so either by pretending to be young; by being conceited and exacting because they are old—in fact, when they trade upon their age—and because they have not used their years so as to become anything personally first-rate. But an ancient garden, for example, does not have to make choices: its balustrades exquisitely crumble; its fountains go spraying delicate as ever among immemorial moss: it claims, and deserves, a

sort of worship. There is no race of men that I love better than the Australians. One lovable feature of theirs seems to me to be this—in their own continent there is nothing much more than 100 years old: they have had no opportunity, till they have gone elsewhere, to contemplate anything with a ‘patine’ upon it. Hence if they speak, as sometimes they do in Australia, with contempt of ‘out-of-date’ affairs, that is easily understood. But when they have come to England, and have seen for example an old English country-house still being lived in by its authentic inhabitants, they always understand the point of that. Other races do not always do so. It remains that the man who has no sense of reverence has no modesty; and the man who has no modesty is a very offensive person. Not because he offends one’s personal instincts, but because he is all-round offensive. Unfortunately, nowadays everything seems to develop this lack of modesty, let alone of reverence. If a man values only what he can get some money for, or even what he can make with his hands (a very enviable talent), he is the more apt to value nothing that cannot be weighed or measured. He becomes therefore mentally thinner and thinner; spiritually more anæmic. You cannot make a choice with your hands.

You cannot measure out one inch of thought, or weigh an ounce of admiration. The very features of a man's face become different— weaker ; more sensual ; duller ; less human —according as he is unable to observe, to value, and to reverence. Clergymen are called ' Reverend.' If they *like* being called so, they are not worth being called so. If they are worthy of being called so, they shrink in humility from being called so. But the proper priest is a man who deserves to be called so, or, better, thought to be so. And any man who ' orders himself lowly and reverently ' to his ' betters,' of whom God is the only and supremely and indisputably Best, achieves a charm shared by none of the vulgar who cannot esteem and bow down before anything first-rate ; and so does any man who becomes first-rate in his walk of life. I have found myself able to reverence many a stoker, a bookie, a bank-clerk or a schoolmaster, who did not count for much, or anything, according to the standards of our times, who none the less was worth a great deal, and deserved that one should mentally bow down to him.

This certainly may imply a sort of fear, when that before which we humble ourselves, or which makes us feel humble, transcends us a very great deal. Thus even on the material

plane, the Big Hole at Kimberley frightened me very much ; so, at times, did the Victoria Falls ; so does anything, perhaps, which seems alive and is not, like the mud volcanoes in New Zealand. St. Peter, overwhelmed by the miracle of the fishes and the personality of Christ, felt his own sinfulness so acutely that he called out to our Lord to go away from him. Still, I am not talking just here of any sense of sin, but of one's personal smallness when confronted with what is very great and alive. It is not for nothing that the title 'The Living God' is so often used in the Old Testament. Often, the realisation that God is *alive*—much more alive than we are, simply because He is the source of all life, ours included—may come as such a shock that it affects us more than does the thought that He *exists*. That, as we said, I am the term of all God's power and awareness, however little aware of Him I usually am myself. Anyhow, it is very good for us indeed to be made, from time to time, thus conscious of what, by instinctive exaggeration, the Saints constantly call our 'nothingness.' Well, I am nothing in the sense that I cannot supply myself with any 'being' ; but now that I *am*, I am very far from nothing, being willed by God, and having the value that God sees in me and wills me to have.

Hence there is no reason why our awe should turn into alarm. 'Fear' in the sense of fright is in no way the hub of religion. There have always been perversions of religion in which the false fear did indeed dominate. Thus even in Christianity there have been heresies, like Jansenism, or some versions of Puritanism, which have crushed the soul beneath the insistence on God's Majesty. Spanish religion, which was very fond of using that word Majesty, was not a gloomy or *cowed* one, though it was fierce, and austere, according to the national temperaments.

Let it then be clearly seen that *if* Religion turns into something that frightens and depresses, it is somehow being false to its own principles, since, however 'awe-ful' God indeed is, He is still good, and good towards us—that is, loving.

This holds true even should the fear of having 'sinned' rise in a man's mind, as it can do in the minds of those even who think they have emancipated themselves from so much as belief in 'sin.' We return to this topic below; but it is necessary from the outset to build ourselves up upon the firm foundation of God's goodness and the impossibility of God's being anything *but* good. But, as we saw, this involves good will; for

God is Will, and God is good. Therefore, however much God reprobates (as we are forced to put it) the sinner's ill use of his own will, He still cannot but love the sinner and display constant active goodness towards him. It is true that a problem would be created if we had to believe that Sin—that is, a complete misconception of what 'Original Sin' meant—had so corrupted human nature in all of us that there was no good at all in us. For, clearly, where there is *no* good there can be no loving what is wholly bad. But the Church has never admitted that Original Sin has made human nature wholly evil: the strange heresies that once taught that doctrine have decayed and to all intents and purposes disappeared. The average modern man assuredly does not think of himself as a mass of corruption, irremediably and eternally ruined by incurable sin! No; we have to recall that whatever be the holiness of God, His infinity, and His Majesty, we still have no grounds for developing a religion that scares, cowers, or torments us.

But the moment I thus trust myself to God, I find that my littleness is rescued from a world of limitations so ghastly that, within

them, no value at all can be attached to the individual. Mankind, viewed altogether apart from God, is individually valueless. During my first aeroplane flight, I remember looking down on to a district where I knew there was a railway, but we were too high for it to be visible. Finally, a faint smudge indicated smoke. Within the train from which it must be issuing were human men and women. Within that thread of a train, invisible for tininess, were yet tinier, still more invisible specks, men and women, complete with hopes and fears, excitement maybe or sorrows, each to itself the centre of its world. Had that train and its passengers been eliminated, the landscape would have remained unchanged, and the business of the country unaltered. The incident would have won a headline or two, but it would have been completely unimportant so far as the process of the world went. Later, after descending 20,000 feet from over the Andes, I watched, the other way round, another speck-like plane, that contained—you could hardly believe it—human creatures like which I myself had been, full of concern about their fate amid those tremendous gales. Had that plane disappeared, one would have said, "Can it have crashed? How dreadful!" But not one item in one's programme would

have been altered. Worse, almost, is the multiplicity of men, and the brevity of their being. Again, I once watched a snowstorm over the hot shores of Lake Taupo, from the slopes of the volcano Ngaruahoë. The myriad, myriad scurry of flakes fell, eddied, suddenly vanished as though sliced off by a knife, where the breath of the water touched them. Not one flake, you felt, could really matter in itself. Taking the mass of humans as a whole, and looking back through their incalculable millions, for how little do all but an infinitesimal few seem to have counted! from the few who seem to have counted, how little seems to have been learnt by again how few! and how swamped are philosophy and art by the brutality of the many!

Those considerations are naïve to the point of banality; but they can pierce the soul—our smallness; our numbers; our brevity; our unimportance. And, our personal limitations! How much more I could do, one imagines, were I physically stronger! had I a better brain! had I more money! I want to do a certain amount in a day; everything interferes with me—and if nothing else does, I am tired before half the allotted work is finished. My very will plays me false: I have not formed my character sufficiently well to enable me to do even

what I want to do and could do. My heredity interferes with me ; so does my environment ; so does my early training or lack of it. And above all, above all, how superficial is all that I do ! how does it not really alter men ! how little persuasive it is ! how unsure am I of its worth ! how unstable, or unmalleable, are those with whom I mix, and again, how very few are they ! And how does everything defeat itself ! Broadcasting is invented—all the more disastrous if a lie be broadcast. ‘ Science ’ makes its advances ; but what scientific invention or discovery cannot be used forthwith for a destructive end ? So, machinery ; so, popular education. Again, it is cold consolation for me to look forward to a possible future when everyone will be not only able but willing to make the ideal use of all these material implements. Even as it is, it looks as if civilisation will have been destroyed long before the perfect race of intelligent co-operative men shall have been produced ! And the more I know, by far the more do I realise what I do not know. Most of us perceive all too clearly that the world, even such as it is, could perfectly well get on without us.

I can imagine the friendly but derisive smile of so many who might read this, and say : “ But, honestly ! Do you really think

that people are like that? whining at their limitations? eating their hearts out because they are, obviously, men, and, they agree, not in the least important, but quite comfortable, thank you, all the same?" I'm afraid that few and fewer people are thus comfortable, and, in one sense, I am sorry when they are, though not for the reasons of the agitator, who is constantly exasperated by the placidity of the British working-class. But how many men *are* irked by the realisation that they are doing their work—hard and ill-paid work—not in the least because they are *they*; ten score of others could do their job and would snap it up the moment they dropped it: life seems to them to be going nowhither: they work, to live: and they live apparently only to work once more next day. They are caught up into the narrow, cramping machine; they will never break out into anything at all. Freedom? There is no such thing. They make no personal choice from day's end to day's end. Anyway, it is on the whole for the sake of those who do feel themselves helpless in a very unsatisfactory world that this book is being written; who do want an outlet, a promise, a prospect. Even not all of these will it suit: may many another book be written by someone himself suffering from fewer limitations! And in-

deed we can now proceed to see that belief in God is precisely what alone emancipates a man from the limitations of himself and his character, his environment and his work, and the whole mechanical universe.

CHAPTER V

GOD OUR RESCUER

I

ALREADY, for the reasons offered above, there can be no such thing for us as a 'closed universe,' a finite 'system' within which we have got to find not only all our satisfaction, but also the explanation for everything. In a sense, the mathematical or 'scientific' universe is not 'closed' at all, but only negatively so: doors must be left open for every new hypothesis: in fact, we have often quoted the professor who told us that the expression 'laws of nature' must now be discarded as 'unscientific,' and have substituted for it 'my endless corrigible hypothesis.' The world that seemed so rigid within its strait waistcoat of 'laws' looks as if it were to become vaguer and vaguer, less and less 'shaped,' and men of science seem likely to give up more and more of their explanations of anything at all, and to confine themselves to showing us what we can *do with* things we can telegraph; telephone; 'televise.' It is, or again it may not be, pleasant to be able to do such things. Few things are so maddening as to be constantly telephoned *to*; television seems likely to strip you of your

last remaining shreds of privacy—but perhaps it is anti-social to want to live in private. It remains, that the moment I begin to ask, “What is ‘this’ that I can use in this way? what is its value? why is any of it *there*?” I receive no answer save, “We do not know.” Then I am, definitely, shut up in a Universe not only limited, but inexplicable. And when I put the worst questions of all—“Why am *I* caught up in all this? what is the worth of *me*? Have I any point? any purpose? any goal? What am I becoming? and why should I become it? and why should I have to become it like this? and what if I never become it, nor anything that gives me the slightest satisfaction?”—bleak will be the answer; and no wonder that so many have at best to set their teeth, be grim, endure, put up with things till either they are dulled down into complete apathy or escape in anger or despair, according to their physical strength. You notice this not least in the middle-aged working-classes, when hope has been given up, and all the promises have been broken, ambitions cheated, and visions faded. They are shut within a closed universe, and if God be meaningless to them, it is then that their life grows brutalised, and not in youth, however ill-behaved that youth may have been.

But into what can the soul travel, beyond the ' flaming ramparts ' of the material world ? We said, first, that the utterly Independent God is *infinite* ; that He is One ; Omnipresent ; and Eternal.

Reflect on what we said about man's sense of ' tininess.' It is true that ' infinite,' when spoken of God, does not mean ' very large ' ; no matter ; we are not in any case to try to *picture* God in His Infinity : grasp with your *mind* that He is utterly without ' limit ' and that *you* can be, and indeed necessarily are, ' in contact ' with Him ; and instantly the limits that defeat you are themselves defeated : they sometimes say that the mind reaches out limitlessly, into every uncharted field of limitless knowledge—so it may ; but it is constantly, even so, defeated by its own ignorance at any given moment, and by its intrinsically limited nature all the while. This limited mind therefore can be in contact with that Mind which is infinite ; and from God's knowledge there is nothing that cannot be poured into the limited mind in such ways as, by His good will, it can be enabled to assimilate it. I am not using this example just here to emphasise the solemn joy that may be mine at the thought of God's All-

Wisdom : but only in so far as it reminds me that there is nothing *in* me which can be defeated by its smallness, because, precisely, it can lift itself up, under the touch of God's grace, till it can be endlessly enriched from the stores of God's Infinity.

It may seem almost bewildering to invite readers to draw a sense of contentment from the thought that God is 'One.' But does it not seem strange because we have so much lost the habit of thinking *definitely* about God at all? A book called *God is my Adventure* (by Rom Landau) evidently must appeal to a certain public; it contains, certainly, interesting, though disheartening, studies of men like Rudolf Steiner, Krishnamurti, Mr. Buchman, and so forth. I am not so much disliking it because it ends up with the duty of living according to the 'God within us'—allowing that (p. 404) "people who object to the word God may replace it by any word that expresses in their opinion the directing impulse of life, such as 'the absolute,' the 'sense of life,' or 'the central power station' (!), or any other of the fashionable names"—a sentence that seems to me perfectly idiotic—but because all the way through practically every sentence contains some indefinite phrase which baffles any intelligent effort to follow the argument. And that, not

because the author is dealing with directly mystical topics, but because he does not seem to think in an orderly, distinct way about his subject—which is, after all, obscure.

Well, that God is One, and must be, is a definite fact enough, and, to me, an extremely restful one. The polytheist pagan lived in a world so thronged with gods and godlets and spirits of various sorts, that when something remarkable happened to him he had no idea which of all these forces was responsible for it. So he was apt to invoke as many names as came into his head; 'God—or Goddess—whoever you are!' was not an infrequent exclamation of his. St. Paul passed the statue which had on its pedestal the inscription—*not*, 'To the Unknown God,' but, 'To a God—I don't know which.' Something had occurred at that spot such as to lead a passer-by to suppose that he had experienced it owing to some divine agency, and wished to run no risk either by thanking *no* god, or by thanking the wrong one. St. Paul, of course, picked up the possible translation of the words, and adapted it to his purpose. It remains that the pagan was in a constant state of anxiety owing to his multiplicity of gods. We do not suffer from that source, precisely, of anxiety; but we live in so distracted a world, surrounded not only by

such a lot of things, subject to so many pressures and tugs, but by rival ones, clashing duties, options, bewilderments, that it can be with a sense of infinite relief that we sink back upon God, the One God, the 'One True' God, as the Scripture loves to call Him. The moment you get into touch with God, you are *there*; it is *God*; there is no seeking farther; there cannot be an option.

The great religion of Islam must be praised for having insisted so strongly on the Unity of God. This was really due, I think, to that Jewish element which existed so strongly within Mohammedanism from the beginning. Islam was an amalgam of Arab religion, low-grade on the whole, and much concerned with demons; of Judaism; and of Christianity—indeed, those who know little of it save that it was a fierce opponent of Christianity in the East, are probably not aware of the very high worship originally given by it to Christ and to His sinless Mother. But there can be no doubt that the doctrine of the Unity and Transcendence of God was strongly taught by it, and for that we can be grateful, especially as it has issued till lately (when Mohammedanism has been infected by its own sort of modernism and is becoming as creedless as all modernisms are) into a most intense prayer. We have watched, in the Sahara or

again in Moorish cafés full of dancing-girls and what not, the Mohammedan withdrawing himself into himself in an astoundingly concentrated prayer.

It may be prudent here to allude to the Unity of God as taught in Hinduism and Brahminism in particular.*

* We hope that readers will vigorously distinguish Buddhism from these. The original Buddhism was in fact a 'heresy' in their regard. The Buddha himself was a practical pessimist agnostic. By that I mean that he had decided, from his experiences, that life was Pain. But it was Pain because you desired things. Therefore the practical line to take was, to rid yourself of desire. When you had done this, you had achieved a state of bliss (to which the name Nirvana may be given). As to questions such as: "Does God exist? Will an 'I' survive my body's death," he refused to give an answer. He remained 'agnostic.' This bleak creed, or lack of creed, could not survive. It was soon enough modified in at least two main directions—Elements of Hindu mythology were re-introduced into it; or the kindliness of the unhappy prince was developed into a whole theory of benevolence. But when Mr. H. G. Wells, for example, offered King Asoka as a sort of fine flower of Buddhism, because he was so prudent, planted trees, tried to educate women, etc., etc., he was praising him for what was precisely the opposite of true Buddhism. According to that, all action is not only useless, but harmful, inasmuch as it implements 'desire.' Indeed if one asks: "If life, then, is so painful, why not commit suicide and have done with it?" Buddha would have said: "But suicide is so violent an action that it witnesses to an extremely violent desire for *e.g.* peace. And so, after it, you would be worse off than ever."

Possibly no Occidental can truthfully put the Indian philosophy into his own mind-forms, let alone words. Some scholars have maintained that the Indian mind functions *essentially* otherwise than ours does. This we cannot admit, else Indians and we would be two different sorts of living beings, and not meet in a common humanity at all. Anyway, the Hindu was so overwhelmed by the sense of the Existence, Unity, and Infinity of an 'X,' that he constantly spoke as though that X 'was' all that is. Naturally we are not here even trying to discuss Hinduism scientifically; perhaps no one can. But the Hindu philosopher was constantly bound to try to express himself in metaphor. The 'X' would gradually exhale itself, revealing itself in 'forms' lower and lower in a scale of being in proportion as each contained a greater amount of Illusion. All that was not *It*, was in reality illusory. After untold æons, it would re-absorb itself, inhale itself back into itself; the illusions would fade. There would not be—there would not even seem to be—anything save the pure 'X.' The eternal Lotus for ever opened and re-closed its petals, rising from an unfathomable Sea. Then the process would begin again. (But why *was* there a 'process'?) Nor would it be right to call the

One 'X' 'God,' for 'gods' were undoubtedly one manifestation of the X, but already heavily dosed with illusion; in fact, an 'enlightened' man was far higher in the scale than an unenlightened godling. The Indian therefore was confronted by the mystery of God's transcendence, and of His immanence in all that is, and the *relative* but not absolute nothingness of finite things; we are confronted by the same problem: but, so it seems to me, more reasonably say that (not being God) we *cannot* see the solution of the problem as with God's eyes: but we *can* see that certain statements are positively false—that God can change by exhaling and inhaling Himself, mixing illusion with Himself: that we are but illusory 'forms' of God, and that on our 're-inhalation' our individuality, though not our personality, vanishes, as an eddy does in a stream when it flattens out—there is just as much water left, and just as much force, but no more eddy.

Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity have safeguarded the Unity of God; India has compromised it, yet in a not ignoble way. She was seeking to 'explain' God's presence in His creation without yielding to the poor escape of Pantheism (which says that everything *is* God; that would make a modest man feel awkward) or using those other later metaphors, no

less poor, such as, that there is in everything a 'spark' of God, or even, a 'part' of God. God is One Infinite Spirit, and cannot be divided into parts. Our intelligence, therefore, proclaims that God is One, Infinite, and All-present: we cannot imagine that; we cannot indeed understand the 'how' of it, since it involves the very Nature of God Himself, which no one can comprehend, as we said, save God Himself. But we can repose upon the *fact* not only of God, but of God *in us*. We repeat, we have no need to strain our eyes nor our ears nor the muscles of our mind, so to say, in order to reach God. St. Teresa, than whom I suppose no greater teacher of mystical prayer has lived, save her colleague St. John of the Cross, found that no 'method' of prayer served her better than to lay aside all pictorial imaginings whatsoever, and indeed all argument, and to repose, like a tired child, upon the fact of God within her, and there to encounter Him.

O Lord, not haughty is my heart;

Not lofty are mine eyes.

Nor walk I amid great things—

Things too marvellous for me!

Indeed, indeed, I think humbly of myself,

And exalt not my soul.

But as a weaned child rests upon its mother,

So resteth my soul within me.—Ps. cxxxi (cxxx).*

* See Footnote next page.

I do not plume myself upon my fine philosophies. I do not struggle any more to *intellectualise* what I know. I do not even claim marvellous experiences or revelations from Thee—I am detached from them; detached by Thine own self from them. The soul, tired out, sighs with the relief of being able to rely on the few absolute certainties that it knows about God, and, without further argument, leans back upon Him and reposes there.

This sense, then, of God's unity and

* The translation of the final couplet is not absolutely certain. But I think that the swing of the psalm carries with it the meaning that the Psalmist has, no doubt, thought all he can, and worked all he can for God, and perceives the futility of human effort apart from God, and man's prerogative of resting after he has worked, and even, after he has been gently drawn away from many a love, hope, and endeavour, of resting in that Infinite Power and Love which indeed was the origin even of what he himself had done and tried to do. The *motif* is much the same as that of Psalm cxxvii (cxxvi):

Unless it be the Lord that builds the house,
They labour in vain that build it.
Unless it be the Lord that keeps the city,
The watchman waketh but in vain.
Vain is it for you to rise up so early,
And so late take rest—
Ye that eat the bread of toil—
For, no less can He give to His beloved
Even while they sleep.

omnipresence can correct for us our sense of multiplicity and, again limitation.

Finally, we will reflect upon the spiritual consequences for us of God's Eternity, should we choose to meditate on that.

One of life's tragedies seems to me that one forgets one's friends. That seems an appalling thing to say. Not only, on both sides, we change, and often change away from one another, and each develops interests that take complete precedence over friendship, like wife and children, but, the living people whom one not only likes but loves become too numerous: it is manifest that the human brain cannot stand the weight of so much memory; the memory itself tries and fails to recollect. A feeling of deep disloyalty remains with one, and yet in one's heart one knows one has not been disloyal. It is all very well to say that distance should not make any difference to friendship; but combined with length of years it can hardly help doing so, especially if you re-meet your friend and find he looks perfectly unlike what you had gone on picturing. After all, the image that you cherish is of him as he was when you last saw him; as you had grown accustomed to him. Of course you can make readjustments. But you don't like pausing to make adjustments when friendship is

concerned. I cannot remember making more genuine friendships than with Australian soldiers during the Great War. When I first visited Australia almost ten years later, I found them changed a good deal exteriorly, but recognisable, and certainly as happy to see me as I was to see them. Six years later, I returned to Australia, and found that by then I had forgotten all sorts of things to which they alluded, and they on their side had forgotten much. Moreover, memories transform themselves gradually, and you may be remembering a phantom. Does one have to resign oneself to that sad line that closes A. E. Housman's lyric prefixed to his *Manilius*, the line that recognises that the dearest bonds are "non aeterni vincla sodalicii"—bonds of a comradeship destined not to last?

Hereupon I recall God's timelessness; His eternity. In Him a thousand years are but as a watch in the night: rather, in Him there is neither past nor future; and in Him, who Is, all that ever was, is or shall be has its enduring life. Hence when I too pass into my enduring existence untroubled by hours and days, absolved from this pageant of so many things that streams past me and can hardly be attended to at all, my real self will encounter the real selves and those of

how many more, and the association will endure. There is hardly anything more heart-breaking than the knowledge that some longed-for encounter with a friend *is* happening, is going on now, and just because I am trying to get all I can out of it, I am interfering with myself and my spontaneity and direct consciousness, and am myself preventing the brief episode from giving me, and maybe him, much happiness, after all. I have actually wished that such 'good-bye' reunions would hurry to their ending. How constantly does one tell friends who are 'seeing you off' not to wait till the train or the ship starts. Not only is there a long-drawn distress; but there is definitely tedium, and the sense that I am disgraced by feeling the presence of a friend (even though he can't be talked to, or, because there is nothing left to say) to have become tedious. On to so intolerable a rack can Time put you. United with the eternal God, we shall experience no such thing; and even now, uniting ourselves to the eternal God, we can peacefully know, though not experience, that we are united to and in communion with, those whose human presence we should so much value, but who are fading even from our poor imagination.

Another fading and disappearance is that

of our Hopes. "Friend, of my infinite dreams—little enough endures." The pagan would argue from that that one had much better not hope too much. "*Vitae summa brevis spem vetat incohare longam.*" So Horace. Life's sum is short, and bans the beginning of any long-drawn hope.

" From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving,
Whatever gods there be."

So a neo-pagan, Swinburne. The believer in God, on the other hand, is sure that he cannot hope too much. And, better still, hopes that are based on God's goodness cannot come to nothing. The discredited Longfellow averred that "Affection never was wasted." If one had nothing but human nature to look at, I can see no reason to hope for anything much from it; indeed, I should confidently expect that every advance made, for example, by science, unless the knowledge of God, and the fear too of God, keep pace in the minds of men, will but put new instruments into the hands of the unscrupulous for the harrying of those less well equipped. So long as the human heart remains unchanged, no social, no political experiment will increase the sum of human

happiness at all. After trying to study with real care the lives of those who live in 'comfortable' circumstances, I see no reason to suppose that there is more *happiness* among them than among the very poor. That is not the beginning of a reason, need I say, for neglecting to bring justice to reign amongst men: but until one's supreme motive for acting justly be God and His righteousness, we show but little, if any, sign of resisting the 'world's slow taint'; and the just man can always be circumvented by the unjust man, if only because he cannot permit himself to use the weapons of deceit. I add in passing that there is no good in expecting more justice from an Absolute State than from any other sort. People used as it were to personify Nature, Evolution, and what not: now the State is being personified. But, after all, it consists only of men, a few men or one man, over an army of bureaucrats, many of them at vast distances from their Chief. And if the One Man, or the small group of men, might conceivably be, and remain, incorrupt, there is no likelihood of a million doing so; and we have had enough experience of what can go on in remote parts of the earth, when the supreme boss, however personally virtuous, is not there to control his underlings, who can, even to-day,

go blood-drunk, and having begun to flog, can flog to death almost before they know what they are at.

We turn to God and hand over to Him our fainting hopes, and, in the Eternal our hopes survive, and are actualised.

The Hebrew, who did not play the metaphysician as the Greek did, derived intense contentment from the thought of God's 'ever-lastingness,' and it is easy to see how, by 'the Ancient of Days' he meant exactly that same thing which we describe as the Eternal.

Of old didst Thou establish the earth,
 And the heavens are the work of Thy Hands ;
 They shall perish, but Thou endurest—
 They shall all wax old as doth a garment :
 And like a vesture shalt Thou change them,
 And they shall pass away—
 But *Thou* art the selfsame—
Thy years will not fail.—Ps. cii (ci).

Before the hills were made, or earth and world
 were formed,
 Thou *wast*, O God, and for ever and for
 ever Thou abidest !—Ps. xc.

With this eternal life of God, the Psalmist loves to contrast man's fleeting years ; and though the next quotation is concerned rather with God's mercy towards man, because,

precisely, of his unsubstantial life, than with His eternity as opposed to man's impermanence, the poem is so exquisite that we like to recall it here :

He knoweth well whereof we are made :

He remembereth that we are dust. . . .

Yes, Man—like the grass are his days ;

Like the flower of the field he bloometh.

But the wind passes over it, and it is gone ;

Nor shall one know its place any more.

—Ps. ciii.

We should love to rehearse many more such stanzas from psalmists and prophets, but we wish, on the whole, to guard against the suggestion that we are here quoting the Scriptures as *authorities*. They are, for the purpose of this book, ancient documents, unique, no doubt, and witnessing to a unique religious development in one People, and despite the strenuous effort to find what should parallel or equal them, for sublimity and purity of concept anywhere else (the Persian literature rises highest, so far as we can judge—much higher, and with surer flight, than that of the Greeks, Plato included when he is speaking of the religious knowledge of God), that enterprise seems to me to have failed. The structure and swing of parts of Mesopotamian poetry are, quite naturally, identical with that of the Jews ; but I simply cannot

admit that a balanced critic could possibly read the *whole* of such Babylonian and Assyrian poems as have come down to us, or even the surviving Egyptian religious poems, without diagnosing at once a difference in kind, a difference of soul. In fact, I should regard any prolonged comparison of Hebrew poetry with that of Egypt and Mesopotamia as waste of time, and, save for the sake of pointing out essential contrasts, an insult to the critical method. I am not then here quoting the Scriptures as authoritative because inspired; elsewhere I could and should do so. But they are still familiar to a dwindling minority of would-be religious men and women; such persons love their rhythms and are still moved by them; and I like to make even this limited use of them.

3

And, before passing on, I must again guard against being supposed to offer the soothing, or stimulating, consequences of a belief in God and in what we can know of His Nature as an 'escape.' I do not want to escape from the torment of the world by any dream. This is why we insisted, and insist again, that there is an *intellectual foundation* for our belief in all those 'attributes' that we have named as God's, and for the others that we

shall proceed to speak of. We do *not* found our religion on an 'experience,' *i.e.* a special feeling or thrill about God: emotions may certainly first turn our attention to God, and dispose us to believe in Him if we have reason for doing so. Yet precisely because they do 'predispose' us for believing in Him, we have to be doubly on our guard against them, and doubly determined to test the arguments that are advanced in favour of a belief in Him. Exactly the same holds good about pleasure. All pleasures, obviously, are pleasurable. But it does not at all follow that all pleasures are good. The pleasures preliminary to getting drunk are pleasurable; but it does not follow that getting drunk is good for me, nor is the aftermath even pleasurable. Therefore I may as well think twice about doing a thing merely because I would like to do it. But further; supposing someone comes up and gives me arguments professing to prove that a pleasure, the pursuit of which I am half inclined to think would be wrong, is right, then I ought to test those arguments all the more rigorously precisely because I would like them to be cogent. No arguments aiming at proving God's existence have been worked out in this book; some have, however, been indicated: they can be read in much more adequate form in the

books mentioned at the end of this one. Yet they ought to do their work without too many books, which confuse quite as much as they enlighten. The one thing to be clear about is, that Religion is not the product of mere Sentiment, let alone of sentimentalism, let alone for the weak-headed or the intimidated. The contrary is true. It is overwhelmingly true that the immense majority of those who deny religion do so because they have never seriously gone into the matter; have done, not too much thinking, but too little—and even the little they have done has seldom been done in an orderly and trained way. One does not expect to play golf or the piano well, or to sing or calculate or talk French really well, without the help of an expert. Yet people plunge into the extremely difficult and even painful task of thinking, and utter opinions, without any such training at all. Hence their opinions, too often, are quite worthless.

CHAPTER VI

GOD OUR ENRICHMENT

I

WE pass to what we said about the Knowledge, Power and Goodness of God. It may be worth pausing to reflect how disastrous would be, even in a human, the combination of two of these qualities without the third. A man who should have knowledge and goodness but no power, would be tragically unhappy. He would see clearly what ought to be done, and earnestly want to do it, and yet be quite unable to *do* it. That is, indeed, the state in which all sorts of clear-sighted, good-hearted people are, who contemplate for example the slums, unemployment, or hatreds between nations. Again, a man who has power and benevolence but no wisdom is apt to work the most awful havoc all round him. He crashes around 'doing good' in disastrous ways. His misplaced charity may actually create crime. Indeed, while I am not antagonistic to a charity that has to be called merely 'palliative,' it is supremely important that those people who have the brains and time to do so, should get to the roots of the disease and seek to correct these. Thus politicians are beginning

to cry out in alarm because of our declining birthrate, and prophetic statisticians are wholly on their side. But within this generation it became very nearly normal to preach artificial birth-restriction for the sake of those in economic difficulties. Families were therefore limited; and houses (or rather towers of flats) are now built *in view of* what has been called the 'two-child family' phase of 'civilisation,' so that people are told by the house-builders (in this case identical with home-breakers) that if they have more than two children they shall not have a house. In a word, palliatives are of some slight good, because, after all, people have to exist from day to day: but unless the roots of the distress be reached—in this case: Why is there so much unemployment? why are foodstuffs destroyed wholesale just when doctors are lamenting the under-feeding of half our population?—worse harm will accrue. Power and Benevolence are inadequate, and may be positively hurtful without Knowledge.

Finally, to be intelligent and powerful but bad, would be the very Devil, and literally so. We have seen enough of moneyed (and therefore powerful) but malicious men, who are not even really intelligent, doing the most cruel damage to lives: if they are also clever, they can think out far more intimately

injurious plans, to get their revenge upon subordinates, for example, who possess a conscience. We have seen this again and again—in the commercial world, the journalistic world, and the theatrical world. The lack, therefore, of any one of these three qualities renders useless, if not pernicious, the possession of the other two. We may therefore be wholeheartedly grateful that in the Infinite there can be no such lack. God is All-Wise : All-Powerful : and All-Good.

In Victorian evangelical circles no 'text' was more popular in nurseries than : "Thou God seest me!" (cf. Gen. xvi. 13). There was too a symbol, common upon the banners of benevolent societies that paraded the streets on Sundays, representing the never-sleeping Eye of God. These banners, with or without their Eye, used for some reason to frighten me out of my wits when I was small. But the Eye was an added horror. Incredible as it may seem to-day, I once saw an animal's eye (cow's eye? pig's eye?) lying hideous in the middle of a London street. My nurse pulled me along, convinced that I would scream. I did not; but this was because anything real was always so enormously inferior to imagined things. The eye

in the street made comparatively no impression on me (save in so far as I still remember it); but the emblazoned Eye, staring unblinking through the night, nearly provided me with a complex against God: God who sees in the Dark. Happily, I did not really associate the processional Eye with God at all. I could fairly easily remind myself that God was 'not really like that,' and be glad that He always saw me. After all, the amount of time during which one was *not* being 'naughty' exceeded by a good deal the times when one was! It remains, therefore, that if one isolates the idea of the all-knowledge of God ("your Father who seeth in secret" is, after all, your Father, and that should not be forgotten), it may become an irksome, if not a terrifying one. Irksome—because I cannot remember the time when I have not sometimes felt: "If only I might be left to *myself*! Must I *always* submit to having 'parties' as a 'treat'?", and alarming, because you knew that God, having seen what you did that you shouldn't do, was quite liable at any moment to inform your aunt, governess, or one of the servants, so that it would all come out. Hence a certain amount of hypocritical 'confession,' so as to get ahead of God, so to say, or anyhow of your relatives who might ask: 'Didn't you do so and so ?

Why didn't you say so? ' But to be seen, all the while, by an unslumbering God who loves you—that is very different!

One of the worst difficulties of life is that one goes through most of it in a state of mystification. Not only can one feel: "What is the point of what I am doing—is it worth it?"; nor only: "It is certainly worth it in itself; but will it have any result and prove *to have been* worth it in the concrete?"—but: "What ought I to do? How ought I to talk to so and so? What kind of person is this 'so and so'? What does he really mean? How is what *I* say reaching *his* mind?" I am not necessarily assuming that we are talking of something that matters, or even that may matter vitally and for always.

My sense of ignorance, indeed, does not begin only when I am trying to think of, or deal with, those vital things, or with God. I can feel dazed about the world at large, or about something so near and small as the motives I have when acting. "No man knoweth whether he be worthy of love or hate." St. Paul could say that he was aware of nothing on his conscience: "yet not for that am I justified"—not for that could he be sure that there *was* nothing there. We have a thousand ways of letting ourselves off, and indeed we are often quite genuinely

unaware of what is so obvious to others, as a man does not know his own profile. At other, and doubtless fewer, times, we may be unable to see that we are doing anything good or useful or ever have done any such thing, and we regard our whole life as fit only for the dust-heap. At such times we are perfectly justified in reclining upon the certainty of God's All-Wisdom.

Thus, if we imagined we did know all about a thing, we should be wrong. For we should be unable to take *God's* all-wise view of it. We can never know it from inside. He can. Nor exhaustively, as He does. Nor in its absolute origin and its ultimate purpose and its relation to all else that is. This holds true about any and every single created thing. In *no* case can we understand it exhaustively and in all its relationships. Still truer is this when we try to take the universe, its course and justification, into our purview, and assess the good and evil in it. I am therefore not surprised or shocked at my ignorance: I may feel it as painful, but not as disconcerting. But I should feel appalled if *no one knew*. Had I to suppose that Ignorance lay at the back of the whole cosmic process, I might well turn sick at heart. Only, that is just what we cannot say. The Infinite God can lack nothing, neither in

power of knowing nor yet in actual knowing. He cannot be unaware. In his hours of despondency, the Psalmist used to say to himself that God did not care, even if He knew, about what was happening to him and in the world at large: "No! there is no knowledge in the Most High!" But when he recovered himself, he would exclaim with joy at that complete and most intimate knowledge—

O Lord, Thou searchest me through and through,
and knowest me:

Thou knowest my sitting down and my standing
up—

My very thoughts 'Thou knowest from afar . . .

All my goings Thou dost thoroughly know:

No word is yet upon my tongue

But Thou knowest it already . . .

Thy knowledge is too wonderful for me:

It is too sublime—I cannot reach to it!

—Ps. cxxxix.

And this acts as a bridge to what we said about our not properly knowing ourselves, let alone understanding ourselves. There are those who are frightened (as I was by the Eye) at the idea of arriving before a God who sees us through and through, and to whom all our masks are transparent, and from whom nothing can be hid. But that is our very best reason for gratitude! "Thank God, that at His great Assize He sees us not with

our own eyes ! ” wrote Francis Thompson, with admirable conviction. Suppose God—to put it crudely—said to us : “ Well, and now what do you think of yourself ? ”, perhaps the most that one could answer would be that in the last resort one hoped that in the innermost, at the undermost, there had been a right intention—a will to do His Will ; a wish not really to defy it even when one was sinning ; a trust that when one said to oneself “ I can’t help it,” there may, after all, have been a grain of truth in that shameful unshouldering of responsibility. Two sentences in the Scriptures make us especially ashamed : “ The woman gave it to me,” and Pilate’s disclaimer of *his* responsibility. But, after all, so muddled are we and so weak, that it may actually be that just when we imagine we are very much our own masters, little kings of the realm of self and of choice, we are bluffing ourselves worst, and God will be at His gentlest when judging us. He will show us our grandest sins as our most forgivable succumbings to what was stronger than we. We have to acknowledge that the same holds good about those acts which make us feel complacent. Speckled ; mildewed ; infected ; with caterpillars at our core. But, then, that is not going to surprise us. Again, we agree that it is God who knows. And

when He exhibits our moth-eaten catalogue of virtuous acts, we shall not be taken aback. We shall say : “ I am very sorry : but not astonished. I never banked on any of that, nor expected my salvation from any of that. O God, how glad I am that there is no cheating *You* ! I should have felt so disgusted, so ashamed, if You had been tricked into letting me into heaven on the basis of that sort of ‘ virtue.’ If, when I had tried to explain to You that all was really not so good as You took it for, You had answered : ‘ Don’t be mock-humble ! ’ and had insisted that the record was first-rate and unimpeachable ! ” As a matter of fact, the good things we shall have tried to do will not have been nothing. It is just as silly to suppose that we never do anything good, as to think that we do nothing else. Only, we are far too short-sighted and clumsy-fingered to disentangle the elements of our acts and to make a proper assessment of good and bad in them. But that is just what God can and does do, and we have the enormous satisfaction of being sure that at long last and for once we can rely upon absolute *rightness*. This certainty of God’s All-Knowledge is therefore a real source of peace and satisfaction. What a relief, to know that no final mistake, at any rate, ever can be made !

We placed the consequences of our being able to trust to God's All-Knowledge first, because personally we feel more acutely haunted by the fact of our ignorance and also lack of appreciation of what little we do know, than by our helplessness actually to do, perform, or produce things. We might add a brief paragraph on that fact—that we appreciate so dimly what little we do know. And indeed it forms another sort of bridge to the notion of power and of action. For when you see that something is very important indeed, you are apt to try to 'do something about it' and to chafe if you can't.

We are apt to suppose that either we know a thing, or we don't: or that we know something 'about' it, but 'not much,' or maybe 'quite a lot.' But all that is very different from appreciating a thing, 'seeing into' it, feeling it acutely, so as to 'mind about' it.

The whole of our life is compact of distraction. When we are really intent upon a thing, absorbed by it, time passes like a flash. We are unaware of anything else. But, as a rule, how far we are from being like that! I am simultaneously aware that it is raining; that I am rather cold; that my type-machine isn't acting perfectly; that my cigarette is nearly finished and that I have no more; that I haven't properly prepared my speech

for this evening and that time is getting on ; that there is a letter that I am shirking ; that there is a verse in the Psalms which would come very pat just here if only I could remember it, and that perhaps I could find it if I spent twenty minutes looking for it but that I don't want to—all this, coupled with the personal limitations due maybe to a second-rate nervous system, to the fatigue of sitting hour after hour on the same chair, and to having a brain which is none too good at thinking out this sort of subject, distracts me in a score of directions, and I am far from putting the whole of myself into any one thought.

At the opposite end, I have periodically sudden moments of illumination. I may suddenly realise, with a jerk, that I am thirty, or fifty, or sixty years old. That a tree, or even a leaf, is unbelievably beautiful—unmanageably beautiful, at any rate ; for you feel that if a thing is as alive, as special, as lovely as this, I ought to ' do something '—get into communion with it—reproduce it (which is just what I can't do, whether by paint or music). That a phrase of music is both inevitable and inspired. That my actual life is immeasurably far from what would harmonise with my profession of being a Christian. That I am alive and ' self '-

conscious. That God exists. That He loves me.

All these things we know on paper, and honestly do believe in. But you can count the days in your life when they attack you with full force, shake you almost to pieces, and alter your whole reaction for ever to their very mention—little as you can recapture what you understood at the moment of enlightening. But, ahead of us, is the “hour of death,” when our senses, at any rate, fade out. *That* distraction, anyway, is no more there. The whole of you will be concentrated. Reality is *at* you, with a rush and a roar. My God! how shall I support *that*? “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” You could not support it. But Power is there, to carry you. Love is there, to moderate the experience for you, till, through gradual increase of anguish and of joy, you shall be able really to contemplate what *is*, and to ‘know even as you are known’—uncloudedly: directly: not ‘by means of a mirror, dimly.’ How very much more alive will you be, when you are ‘dead,’ than now you are!

Perhaps we need not really spend so long over the thought of God’s Power, if only because our own sense of impotence is more easily attended to than our ignorance. For

when I know that I am ignorant, I am at least knowing it; but when I feel helpless, I *am* helpless. It has often been said that a perception of one's ignorance is a—if not *the*!—beginning of philosophy. But to recognise that one cannot do something is not a beginning of being able to do it. It is obvious that we cannot create, or make something out of nothing, and that we never shall be able to do that. Anything that we do make is merely a rearrangement of something that was there before. Nor can we preserve anything in being for ever. The interior impetus flags in itself: a mummy is not a man, however long it lasts, and all the while, even in the mummy, processes of disintegration are going on. The imperceptible dust is all the while falling in fine clouds. Nor, should they succeed in prolonging human life for a very long time, is there any 'eternalising' of the past. I know that Browning said that: "What entered into thee—that was, is, and shall be": and that is partially true. None the less, childhood and youth will be over, and they were substantial things, and can neither be perpetuated nor recaptured. Further, there are enormously more things we cannot do than things that we can. This may not matter very much, so long as we do not want to do them

and proceed to chafe or pine. But it grows worse, if we see that it would be very good to be able to do them, and that they need to be done, and that others perhaps could do them but won't, and I would, but can't. But it is worst when I see that I *could have* done them, had I not rendered *myself* incapable of doing them, for instance, by past follies or sins, by wasted time when I could have been learning, or acquiring skill or developing talents that, through selfish laziness, I have allowed to become atrophied. And if I had but consistently prayed properly, how different now would be my relation towards God! what power *in Him* would be mine!

At this point it is imperative that I should turn my mind to God and to His All-mightiness. That All-mightiness exists, and it is open to me to draw on it. Better, it is not like an inert thing—a deposit in a bank, or even water in a cistern. It is a positive upspringing fact: it is in all things the Initiative of Action. It really seems as though my most tragical *power* were that of preventing God from using His full Power for and in me.

Possibly I am inclined to consider that it is my sins that prevent, or have prevented, God from taking initiatives in my soul, and to say with St. Peter: "Depart from me, for

I am a sinful man." But the Church begins one of her Collects thus: "O God, who showest Thine almighty power *most chiefly* in showing mercy and by sparing." And this is in keeping with the doctrine of the Old Testament itself:

Praise the Lord, O my soul;

And let all that is within me praise His holy
Name! . . .

Who pardoneth all thy transgressions,

Who healeth all thy sicknesses . . .

Who satisfieth with good things thy yearning,

So that like an eagle's is thy youth renewed! . . .

Merciful and long-suffering is The Lord:

Long-suffering indeed and gracious.

Not for always will He be angry,

Nor for ever and for ever will He chide.

Not according to our sins dealeth *He* with us,

Nor payeth He back our iniquities unto us.

For, as heaven is high raised above the earth,

Even so maketh He firm His goodness over them
that fear Him.

For as dawn is from dusk,

So far casteth He away from us our sins.

As a father pitieth his children,

Even so pitieth The Lord those that have awe for
Him.—Ps. ciii. 5.

The New Testament carries us in many ways farther forward, but we single out only a passage from St. Paul (I Cor. i. 22 *sqq.*), though it primarily refers to strength rather

of intelligence than of will; wisdom rather than power.

The Jews demand 'signs'—'mighty works' such as no mortal man could do—and the Greeks ask for philosophy. But *we* preach Christ Crucified—shocking to the Jews and to the Greeks folly—but to those who are called, Christ, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God. For wiser than men is God's folly, and stronger than men, God's weakness. Reflect on your own vocation, brethren—how there are not many among you human-wise learned, or many that are powerful, nor many of high birth. But it is the foolish things of this world that God has picked out in order to put to shame the 'wise,' and the weak things of this world hath God chosen out, to put to shame the 'strong,' yes, and the 'nobodies' of this world, the nonentities hath God chosen out—what does not so much as exist—to bring to naught that which 'is.'

These splendid piled-up paradoxes lead up to one of St. Paul's favourite conclusions—that no man has the right to boast before God, or to assign anything of his salvation to his personal prowess, so to say. But we began this section, not by being inflated by the sense of powers of our own, but by the very opposite—being dispirited at seeing ourselves so helpless in so strong, turbulent, perverse a world—or even, just as so limited

and inadequate for anything much in a perfectly normal world, and again, as spoilt for so much by our sins and other chosen shortcomings. We are not in the very least inclined to boast. If anything, we need to be told to take heart and be a little more plucky and optimistic and energetic.

All this we can be when we reflect upon the Power of God that at all points backs us, and on which we can draw whenever we choose.

But 'choose'! That is the supreme difficulty for many of us. Lucretius long ago spoke of '*incerta voluntas*'—our *wavering wills*. Towards the end of any over-ripe civilisation, you do not notice lack of intelligence so much as a petering out of the *Will*. St. Francis Borgia commented on that in his sixteenth-century Spain. St. Ignatius Loyola concentrated after his own fashion so much upon the will, that I think this was one reason (and not only the rôle played by his followers against the Lutheran doctrine of the *serva voluntas*, and then the aberrations of the Jansenists and a false Augustinianism) why the wretched Jesuits were accused of having 'invented Free Will'! But St. Ignatius wanted us to build up 'solid virtues,' not merely be self-disciplined. He wished man to hand over his will to God, source of all power—

Take, Lord, take for Thyself all the whole of my liberty—accept my memory, my intelligence and my will—all of it: whatsoever I have or possess, it is Thou didst lavish it upon me. That make I wholly over back to Thee and hand it utterly over to Thy will for government. Give me but Thy love and Thy grace, and I am rich enough, and ask for nothing more.

We cannot so divest ourselves of our free wills as to make them no more free, or so as to turn into marionettes in the hands of God: but we can *freely* implore Him to give us such grace that we interpose no more obstacles between ourselves and Himself, and that, on the contrary, our whole appetite may be for that which He desires. We invite, even, with St. Augustine, God's full control (notice, we *freely* invite it): "Nostras etiam rebelles ad Te compelle voluntates"—"Even when our wills rebel, Lord, our wills towards Thee compel!" Even so, He will not coerce them, but so help them according to their own nature that they will both do what is right, but do it *strongly*, in the power of God.

St. Paul (Phil. iii. 21) foresees his own transformation "according to the energising of His Power in very deed to subordinate all things to Himself": he "strains and struggles in the measure of that energy of

His that energises so mightily *in me*” (Col. i. 29): “That you may know,” he writes to the Ephesians (i. 19), “what is the overwhelming greatness of His power towards you who believe . . . (for) it is on the scale of the *energy* of the *might* of His *strength* that He made to act in the person of Christ,” and so forth. Thus did Paul rise out of the perception of his own inadequacy into an air of unbounded confidence and resolution.

Not that he failed, at times, to feel very ill, lonely, and frightened, as when he went first to Corinth immediately after his failure at Athens. But we can only repeat how important it is not to found our religion upon feeling. Our reason shows us that God *must* be thus powerful—all-mighty—and we are right to cling to this intellectual certainty in hours of extreme ‘desolation,’ when the things of God seem to be defeated at every turn by what is anti-God. And if we can accept and use the Christian revelation, why then we know this truth all over again, and cling to it by Faith also. The Christian therefore is liable to *feel* weak, and yet to be right in *knowing* that he is strong. But he cannot know that unless he takes God into account. It is, then, of incalculable value so to take Him into account, and to remove God from a man’s mind and life

is to weaken and impoverish the man immeasurably.

Perhaps we need spend even less space over the third and what should be far the most influential truth about God—the truth that He is Good, and that He loves. Let us again premise this—if God is All-Good, it cannot but be that He loves. For, if He is good, His will is good ; and His will towards us is good. Now, in its essence, Love is good will. No one is so silly as to suppose (save maybe at the moment) that the frothing of the emotions is *love*. It may accompany true love ; but there can be true love without any emotional upheaval ; and any amount of emotional upheavals without love. Since God, then, a Pure Spirit, has neither nerves nor blood nor instincts nor, consequently, emotions such as we have, He has a love for us most certainly, because His will towards us is consistently good : but it is not an emotional or ‘ sentimental ’ love.

Now, this may chill a reader, though it should not. He possesses the substance, in possessing God’s love as I have described it : but, being a man, he probably ‘ feels ’ he wants something more—he wants, precisely, some sentiment. Now, one cannot make metaphysics sentimental. And we have said that hard-headed metaphysics underlie

all our recognitions of Truth, even about God. Yet they do but underlie them. Man does not live by metaphysics only. He has the perfect right to make use of and appeal to all that is in him, in order to help himself to 'react' rightly towards God. Whatever he imagines that is good, cannot ever catch up with the Reality of God. How right, therefore, were the Jews, and indeed the Greeks and many another nation or race, to call God 'Father,' and to perceive that the best they knew or dreamed about human fatherhood was all, and more than all, of it there, as in its origin, in God. "After whom all familyhood on earth is named" (Eph. iii. 15). Whatever good thing we are conscious of derives its existence and its goodness and loveliness from God, source of all being. Therefore the Jews were right to think of God in terms of Fatherhood and indeed of Motherhood: "Shall a mother forget her child? Yet will I not forget thee" (Is. xlix. 15); and again of Spouse. Therefore it is a very great, and vulgar, mistake indeed to mock at a religion as 'anthropomorphic.' The man who never uses his imagination about God has dehumanised himself, and also his religion. Even a child learning the Catholic Catechism knows that when it says that our Lord took His throne at the right hand of God, it is not

equipping God with hands : but how foolish were we, did we jettison from our very language a traditional and very meaningful way of speaking. Our religion ought not to become like that already old-fashioned way of decorating rooms—everything eliminated save flat surfaces, glass, and chromium-plated, so that your sitting-room looks like an operating-theatre. I have been in sufficient operating-theatres for me not particularly to mind them ; they seem to me quite humane, but certainly not human. But religion ought to be human, and, from the Christian point of view, can't be anything else, since, on the one hand, we are human, and, on the other, we believe that God took up our flesh, and became True Man. It is, then, indeed, quite certain that we do not expect anyone to appreciate fully the Love of God who cannot yet believe as we do, nor to study God and His Love in the person of Jesus Christ. But, all the same, it is possible for the non-Christian, if only he can use the ideas that we have previously suggested as quite certainly and inevitably true, to see that God is *necessarily* not only all-Wise and all-Powerful, but all-Good and *therefore* all-loving.

Now, as usual, I expect the difficulty about this is, not the truth of the thing in

itself, but either because " I do not *feel as if* He were. I am often very uncomfortable, and very unhappy. Everything goes wrong : everything seems unjust or anyway unkind : and some things even seem cruel"—or, because the world at large seems to me in such desperate trouble that it is perfectly impossible for me to suppose that someone not only wise and powerful but loving is looking after it.

At the back of this is really the mystery : why God should ever have allowed a world to come into existence in which there *could* be suffering (the consequence of being as I ought not to be) or ' wrong ' of any sort.

Let us say at once that not one of us humans professes to know ' why ' God made the world precisely like this, and not in any other way. We can, of course, see that a world with free-will in it is nobler than a merely mechanical world, and where there is free-will there is the possibility of its misuse. That it has been and is misused, our observation and our conscience combine to assure us. But when one thing goes awry, everything else, in an interconnected system, is bound to do so. It remains, however, better to have free-will than to be machines merely ; and what has gone awry can be corrected, especially by God, source of all life and power, alone able

to make that which had been wrong—not only right—but better than it would have been without the wrong. Thus Sin is always sin and to be abhorred; but many a man has learnt so much from his own sins that he is the better for having sinned them and repented. Many a man who would else have been happy-go-lucky, and even full of illusions about himself, and superficial, has been so shocked at seeing that he has done what he would never have thought he could, that (God's grace assisting him) he has become far wiser, more circumspect, humbler, and vastly more self-disciplined.

As for physical suffering, it is clear anyway that we make it far worse than it need be by chafing, reflecting upon it, being nervous about it, and making no use of it. I would almost declare that prolonged discomfort is worse to bear than acute pain. People who never feel very well will tell you that it is genuinely a relief to get properly ill. Anyone probably would prefer to break his leg rather than to live in a perpetual state of mild headache. But, to speak personally, while I detest feeling 'rather seedy,' as they say, I doubt if I have ever regretted experiencing really sharp pain, save when it has gone on so long that one's ability to resist began to run out. First of all, pain is a true experience

that widens your sympathies enormously. I have actually known a man who took trouble to hunt up another who had been one of his subordinates and was always having headaches. He himself had never had one, and thought it silly to say you had one and to stop work on the strength of it. He was a charitable man, admitted that there might be some excuse for a weakling, but none the less in his heart thought it was all nonsense. Finally he himself got a headache. It was such a revelation to him that, as I said, he took trouble to hunt up his ex-employee and apologise. Many a husband might reflect on that, when *he* feels well, but is told by his wife that she 'has a headache' and can't come out with him or do this or that. (Especially as that sort of man is liable to raise Cain if he stubs his toe against a step or what not.) Well, I must say that I have never regretted being properly ill and learning what it meant. Besides, it reveals unguessed depths of kindness, imaginativeness and even heroism in others. Once, in a little country station in Styria, I abruptly developed the vulgar toothache, which drove me almost delirious. (I acknowledge that it was due to no less than two abscesses, which suddenly came to a head, or whatever abscesses do come to. Anyway, it was

catastrophic.) Now, a superb young athlete with whom I had been talking saw me all the way home to London and did not, I think, sleep any more than I did till we got there. Now, what do you think about that ? And after a motor-smash in New Zealand, I was collected by two farmers who would never allow me to learn their names, and was removed by them to a hospital, even though I had completely destroyed their best clothes and, I should think, their car, with my blood. True, on their side, they nearly destroyed what remained of my head with iodine ; but after removing me, as I said, and contemplating my arteries being filled with saline injections, they vanished, and do what I would afterwards, I could never get at them to thank them.

But, much deeper than all this, there is no time like that during which you are having pain, for feeling you are definitely not being asked to do anything, to talk, to think out plans, to put yourself at a job. God is not now asking any such thing from you. You can lie back (like the weaned child in the Psalms) and just *be* the thing that God wants you to be just then, and you can't be wrong about it. Please God, the Christian will also remember Calvary. As a member of the Body, he will be glad to be where his Head was. He may

even recall—as we said above—how very little he can do *for* other people. But he never doubts for a moment that suffering is action. In a way, I suppose that a mother who looks at her little child in pain may feel absolutely heartbroken that she is not suffering *with* it—she would be ever so ready to suffer *instead* of it. Of course, if she could endure *useful* suffering like holding its head up till she got cramp, she would be delighted to provide that. The Christian, then, who sees his Lord as for ever trying to live in the hearts of men, and perfectly prepared to die again and again for any man, and would be willing to repeat the whole of His Passion—“the Passion of a thousand years”—“Jésus est en agonie jusqu’à la fin du monde,” said the so-often-quoted Pascal—is only too glad not to be what St. Bernard called the delicate member of a thorn-crowned Head. But, in any case, the man who knows how to use pain will find how second-rate, second-rank things flake off; how simple the issue has become; how amplified yet disencumbered the perspective; how clear the horizon. It is waste of time to wonder what rôle pain might have had in a world different from ours. In *this* world it is invaluable. Those who try to eliminate pain act rightly, if and when they are trying to eliminate that ‘wrong’ which is

its origin. But until they eliminate sin, they will not have so much as approached the origin of the worst pains of all. No pain in the body comes anywhere near spiritual grief. The Gospels themselves describe as Christ's 'agony' not the appalling events that led up to His physical crucifixion, but what happened in Gethsemane—fear; disgust of soul; heartbreak. Well, the innocent can make use of all that too. Mrs. Meynell was perfectly right when she said that the heart-breaking spectacle was not the suffering—even the bewildered suffering—of the innocent, but the wasted suffering of the wicked. This invaluable gift was put into their hands, and they did not know what to do with it. . . . In a word, given this world and the history of sin and ignorance that is proper to it, suffering, even mental, does not make much of a problem for me. I am far more anxious about a man if I cannot see he is having any pain, than I might be if I saw him *in* pain. Why, one actually says: "So and so cannot sing that song—or any first-rate song—properly, because his heart hasn't been sufficiently broken so far. He doesn't know what it means: he doesn't know what the world means." Perhaps there is no time comparable with pain-time for loving God.

In short, we all agree that Pain, and Wrong,

its origin, are a mystery. That is not an 'easy way out.' We do not call things 'mysteries' as a way of escaping the necessity of saying that they are lies. Strange as it may seem, men very often look back to the struggling, 'painful,' part of their career as to the happiest part. Certainly we must all have known men and women who were far *nicer* when they were struggling than they were when 'prosperous.' Far more cheerful, imaginative, less hunted, and immeasurably kinder.

It is true that one cannot deliberately engineer pain for the making of other people pleasanter; but it is bad for one to be always shirking pain oneself, and there is seldom any harm in engineering for oneself a somewhat harder life than one need have.

If, then, one can surmount the temptation to think, because of pain, that God does not or cannot love us, there is really nothing to prevent us from making the most of the fact that He does. And I am convinced that nothing in the world so accelerates the development of the spiritual life as this perception of God's love for us. We are often told we ought to 'love God,' and find that to be difficult enough; on the whole, we had better not try to force ourselves to do so; we should only work up fictitious emotions,

and experience the reaction which always follows every purely personal attempt to improve our spiritual make-up. Far better just to allow oneself to bask, as it were, in the knowledge of God's love for *us*. Nothing awakens love in us so readily as the knowledge that we are loved. Why, if we happen to hear that a person we dislike has said something kind and affectionate of us behind our back, we are touched, begin to think better of him, and are halfway towards making friends. Presumably what may still interfere with us in regard of God is, the perception of our extreme unlovableness at least in our own eyes; but if once we can get past that, and simply accept the fact that God loves us all the same, I cannot see any further difficulty surviving.

In fact, any difficulty that might remain would surely be due to our imagination playing us false. We cannot 'feel as if' the invisible and immutable God *could* love anyone or anything. We acknowledged above that His love for us was not the 'emotional' sort of love that we mostly want. If, however, we have the courage to hoist ourselves out of all sentimentalism, and to be clear about what we mean by 'love,' then we shall see that God does love us, and are likely never to recover from the shock of realising it. We

have now to get down to some much simpler consequences of a belief in God and of acting upon it, or even, of allowing it to have its way with our souls apart from any interference on our side.

CHAPTER VII

GOD CONTROLLING ME

LET me take what first occurs to me—Serenity, and Strength, repeating not a little of what went before, but from a different point of view.

It never does a man any harm to work hard. There is much panegyric, at present, of the virtues of 'leisure.' Let machinery, it is urged, by all means put more and more men out of work. By all means let the working-day be reduced to maybe six hours only, or even three. Leisure, playtime, is good for everyone. Let labour-saving appliances be multiplied and let everyone grow up unharassed and able to express themselves. Well, so far as my personal experience goes, I am healthier and happier just in proportion as I am working very hard. I believe wholeheartedly in sweat. I think that from time to time it is good for me to over-work—in this sense, that I be asked to do more than I think I can do. "Do you suppose," said a Cardinal to the Foundress of a Religious Order, "that God is going to ask from you only what is possible?" But I do not believe in feverish work—in *habitual* over-work—in

being normally over-taxed in brawn or in brain. This wears away the nervous system, and there will be a time when the machine just downs tools, goes on strike, and refuses to do anything at all.

Now, if I am just believing that certain things ought to be done, and that I am the man to do them, and continue to see that they ought to be done, and begin to see that I cannot do them—then a conflict arises within me, and I chafe, lament, struggle, and finally despond. But if I am able to remember that “unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it—vain is it for you to arise so early and so late take rest,” God can give just as much as you would have done, to His beloved, even while they are fast asleep, I get into none of those melancholy states. Certainly I see that I am not half so necessary as I thought I was: I am, in fact, remarkably unimportant, and the more I see the vastness of the necessary task, the more I also see how incompetent I am to do it. That is a good little humiliation. But also, what a relief! The thing is *not* dependent upon *me*. Nor is this an ‘opium.’ If I thought: ‘*I* need not, or anyway will not, worry—no matter whether anyone else ever does the job or not,’ then indeed I should be lulling myself into laziness. But if I truly

believe in God, and see that He does not *mean me* to do the whole of this job nor to pat myself on the back for having done it, and that—if indeed it needs to be done—He in His wisdom, power and goodness is sure to get it done, though not through me—then, by handing it over to Him I am free, to start with, from the risk of a lot of self-worship and of grabbing, and I put it into Hands that are fully capable of carrying the thing through. This is almost to repeat what we said about pain or illness. If I did not engineer this illness through obstinacy or other fault of mine, it simply means that God does not wish me to be working just now, even though it looks to me as though a number of important letters were being unanswered, lectures un-given, and so forth. God did not need those things. So let it be. I sleep content and am untroubled even about my ungratified heart's desire.

Such serenity is therefore quite unlike the 'apathy' of the Stoic, the 'ataraxia' of the Epicurean or the Buddhist calm. The Buddha, regarding it as obvious that Life was Pain, and that it was Pain because of Desire, aimed at eliminating all desire from his spiritual make-up: the 'bliss' in which he held he would then find himself was, so far as we can judge, really negative. The

Epicurean had the cult of pleasure, but in his choice of pleasures he was regulated by a determination to accept none that should have an unpleasant aftermath or clash with anything else: he must be imperturbable, unruffled. The Stoic believed in the world-fate wherein he too was involved, so that the most he could do to alter things would be to struggle like a dog tied beneath a moving cart—he would merely make things worse for himself, and get to exactly the same destination, after all. So whether or no the Stoic liked the road along which he was being led, he had better accept it calmly, and not ‘fret’ about it. True, the later Epicureanism degenerated on the whole into a mere pursuit of pleasure; while the later Stoics beautified their rather bleak philosophy with emotional metaphors and personifications; it remains that the serenity of one who possesses at the back of his mind the certainty of God’s wisdom, power and love, and knows that God is personal in the sense that He is the very fountain of personality and of all that is best in any person, is at peace as never was the Epicurean, with his gods ‘composed of very fine atoms,’ totally carefree as regards our human race; and as never might be the Stoic who held that his use of, say, the word ‘Father’ about God was *merely* meta-

phorical; and quite differently from the Buddha, who did not know whether there were any gods at all, but merely that he was unhappy and was seeking not to be. The serenity of the Christian is compatible with a maximum of desire—an intense effort after God, precisely because of what can be known of God.

Another consequence of believing in God is vastly increased strength—moral and spiritual certainly, and, in a way, almost physical. Even apart from help and grace that God gladly imparts to those who try to love and serve Him, this increase of strength is to be expected and natural. To fret, chafe, be anxious, feverish or distraught uses up a terrible amount of nervous energy and inhibits much activity. If I am thus distraught, vitality is pouring away from me by a hundred channels. One has only to watch the pitiable state into which the ‘scrupulous,’ as they are called, can decline. During the War I used, whenever possible, to give short ‘retreats’ to soldiers, of whom a high percentage were Australians, New Zealanders or Canadians. Now, you may take it for granted that no Australian, let alone an Australian corporal or sergeant, is a softling. They were, indeed, very tough material to handle, though lovable in the

extreme. The making of those retreats must have seemed to many of their mates sheer insanity—to spend a week-end being preached at, going to confession and Communion, and getting up much earlier than they need have done! But after the retreat, these men again and again said that they felt so extremely fit that they could play football better. Naturally. Their consciences, in a good many cases, had been irking them. Now they were re-harmonised. They might have begun to think that in their circumstances it was impossible for them to live up to their ideals. Now they had not only courage to try, but a very good hope of success. In something of the same way, wounded men used to come to such retreats from a variety of hospitals. Ambulances were actually lent by Authority to take them there—not that I believe this was quite legitimate. The improvement in the men's health on their return was so manifest that it became a joke. Nurses used to pretend that so and so was a Catholic in order to get him invited to a retreat. Commandants used to say that a week-end retreat did a man more good than a couple of months of hospital. Something of the same sort of thing was noticeable when the Last Sacraments were given to a very sick man. Here,

again, orderlies would say—half jokingly and more than half seriously: “Couldn’t you get so and so to apply to ‘change his religion,’ so that you could do them things to him that does such good to the R.C.s.?” But here, of course, a different factor comes into play. I am very far indeed from failing to recall ‘suggestion,’ change of scene (you couldn’t do much in those days in the way of change of diet), the value of getting your personal history off your chest, as they say, and all the other ‘naturalistic’ considerations that could be (quite properly) adduced to explain the effect upon these men of a week-end of spiritual peace and pacification. Those who do not believe in God are free to adduce all that; indeed, they must; and they have nothing more to adduce. The believer in God can adduce, he, too, all of it, but something more—much more. I fear I have too often quoted the incident which occurred to me in a shell-shock hospital. The doctor with whom I was going round said to me:

“These men don’t really get well, and can’t.”

I said: “Why not?”

“Because,” said he, “they have no principles of life. When they joined up, either they had constructed no framework for life as yet, being too young: or their framework

has been shattered, and they have no principles, nor cogent motives, for making a new one."

I said: "Why don't you give them some?"

He answered: "Because we haven't got any either. We are experimentalists. This is where *you* should come in."

I beg that this sort of consideration be not seen as having any connection, however remote, with Christian Science. It involves the denial neither of the reality of matter, nor of illness nor of pain. But it asserts that the power of the mind, when well constructed, to control itself and also the body, with which it is a coefficient making up the man, is far greater than may be supposed, and it *becomes* better and better constructed the clearer it is about God.

The increase of mental strength owing to having certainties in your thought is manifestly immeasurable. Much nonsense is talked about freedom of thought. The more you know for certain, the less can you think the opposite, and the less are you liable to be wrong. People hatched the expression 'Free Thought,' meaning by it disbelief or agnosticism, only because they fancied that 'the Churches' were imposing on people's minds as true certain formulas that had never

been thought out. But this was due to sheer unawareness of facts. No structure so vast, solid and lucid as Christian theology has ever been put together. We at any rate have been careful to begin not even once from the standpoint of authority, scriptural, ecclesiastical or other: we do not therefore admit for a moment that the freedom of thought which is due to agnosticism is in any sense a benefit. It is, in fact, a disability for which those who suffer from it need to be commiserated. Having so little certainty in life, they are crippled as to all ultimate issues. In a word, the strength both of mind and of body acquired by a clear and definite belief in God is incalculably great.

And together with strength, at least of mind, should go courage. Courage does not mean not-feeling-frightened. The man who feels no fear may be simply rather thick-skinned and stupid, or not know the facts about the perils he is asked to confront. Nor is a merely reckless man courageous. Oddly enough, all except one of the V.C.s we knew personally during the War were very modest young men and had been almost exceptionally quiet boys. Anyhow, courage may be shown rather in tenacity,

especially in a lonely tenacity, than in single daring feats. It really is that final kind of strength which enables a man to use and go on using all his other kinds of strength, and in fact to do rather more than he can. "Do you suppose God will ask you to do only what is possible?"

Well, the man who believes clearly in God, and is united to Him by trying to please Him, knows for certain that God is supporting him and will continue to do so. "I can do all things," said St. Paul boldly, "in Him who strengtheneth me." If you know you can do a thing, half the battle is already won, although, as we said, you still have to choose actually to do it. But he who understands God, and what we have singled out as certainties about Him, will constantly experience within himself the urge, precisely, that he should *will*: the spurring on, to choose. This need not in the very least obliterate his distaste for his task, or even his fear of it, as Christ very fully experienced in Gethsemane. None the less, He went through with it, basing Himself upon His Father's will energising within Him.

I pass to the topic of truthfulness, and venture to do so from an angle which may not be usual, but which surely is structurally accurate with what has gone before.

God is Absolute Reality and the source of all reality. What is No-Thing, Un-Real, not according to what *is*, is antagonistic to the very essence of God. It must (to use almost grotesquely human language) shock Him to the innermost. You see what I mean. Not for nothing did St. John place 'outside' any possible heaven 'all that loveth or maketh a lie' (Apoc. xxii. 15). The father of Lies was the Devil (Jn. viii. 44). Now, most people, I fancy, who tell lies, do so happy-go-luckily, or else (we return to this) because they are the obvious things to tell in the circumstances; on the whole, business circumstances in the wide sense—What Pays. If you told them that they were attacking God in His essence; doing what ran counter to the Reality of God; trying so far as in them lay to murder God—they would regard you as lunatic. 'Religious Fanatic' would be far too mild a term for you. If I say I am 'not at home' when I am, who in his senses is going to tell me I am trying to murder God? Well, of course, that is a formula. Everyone knows that it means: 'I do not want to see anyone,' or, at least, 'I do not want to see *you*.' One tells lies out of funk, out of laziness, from a desire to boast, or at least to decorate one's story and make it a little more sym-

metrical. All the same, *in so far* as one offers Non-Being for Being—Lie for Truth—one is running directly counter to the very Nature of God. Plato went so far as to say that all poetry, or anyway theatrical performances, were versions of Lying; and it is curious that the Greek word for an actor should have ceased (in our language) to exist save as ‘hypocrite,’ originally meaning merely an ‘answerer back’ upon the stage, but to-day, a liar of an exceptionally disgusting kind.

But now, exalt this from the individual proclivity to the general rule. My knowledge of business methods is small. But I do know a number of business men, from commercial travellers to small shopkeepers and to what they call ‘bosses.’ These men tell me story after story, based on direct personal experience and (so they feel) personal inevitable behaviour, which describe a habitual, calculated, commanded, inevitable career of Cheating. Let me assure readers that sexual problems, in the Confessional, are child’s-play compared with the problems related to finance. My brain reels when I am told of what percentage of cement is really put into a road or a bridge, compared with what was contracted for, and I have to make up my mind who has defrauded whom.

Some time ago I preached a sermon in which I had some things to say about jerry-building—houses put up for the ‘poor’ dislodged from slums and transferred to ‘human’ houses. Within a month or two the wood-work was warping, the cement was splitting, the walls were sweating. Here was a case of theft, if not murder, on a large—*i.e.* a ‘social’—scale. Soon enough I got a letter from a man who said, “*I built the church in which you said all that. I can tell you exactly how much, and what kind, of jerry-building was put, by me, into that church—especially the roof. I will also tell you of another church I built—and if you knew what trouble I got into with those to whom I was responsible for putting so much good work into that church!*” I have been down several mines: I remember one, in Scotland, where the owners were undisguisedly and most wickedly cheating the men: another, in England, where the representative of the men had come to an agreement with the representative of the owners to cheat both owners and men for the sake of their own pockets. Their argument was—they were very frank: I sat down on the floor and refused to move until they had said what they did and why—they said that, after all, a man had to live. Therefore they, ‘lived’ on

the money they respectively stole. Round a large commercial city I have known quite a lot of young married couples who were living manifestly beyond their means, and, of course, feeling it out of the question to have any children. Why was that? Because they, in their 'position' in a firm, were 'required' by some dastardly imbecile of a superior to 'maintain a certain standard of social life.' The men had to wear black coats, if not top hats. The wives had to dress this and this; to give sherry parties (the men, anyway, would far have preferred beer) and bridge-parties—probably half of them played bridge abominably; and in short, to live a life of sham, of lie (a lie that no one was fool enough to be taken in by), all of it done in the name, or for the sake, of a fake social pantomime by which the women were sometimes (or were they?) taken in, but the men never.

Now, all of this found its way even into the churches. Ministers of God succumbed to the hierarchy of Pews. So-and-so could not sit next to so-and-so. Why not? Because in every non-church—in every financial—walk of life, so-and-so was a cut above his, and especially her neighbour. This damnable nonsense is not only that, but an offence against God, who created and is preserving

these and those ; who is the Father of all equally, and who offers the same destiny to all alike. The Social Lie is therefore an affront to God, who is Reality, Truth, in regard of all creation. This does not mean that I suggest that everyone should treat everyone in exactly the same way exteriorly. For people differ within and without. You really ought to treat each individual differently from each other one, because you are paying profound respect to the individuality of each, inasmuch as it is separately created, maintained, and destined by God. But to do so because a Boss tells you to, in the interests of his Concern—its artificial, man-made, theatrical interests—is an abomination ; and with this sort of thing Business, as it exists, is crammed.

What, then, do I ask ? That Believers in God should resign themselves to be not a little poorer, and more socially despised, than their compeers ? Yes ; on the whole I think I do. I know quite a number of people, public-houses included, who could make any amount more money if they resorted to this or that indecency or trick—but they will not condescend. They make the sacrifice. They think it would be wrong. They prefer to be truthful along with God rather than liars. I don't suppose that they are so metaphysically-

minded as to consider that a Lie is an attack upon God's Reality ; but they *won't tell lies*. I have known young men who gave up a job, in, for example, a confectioner's, because they were told to say that a box of chocolates contained better chocolates than another did, whereas the chocolates were identical, but the box was tied up with a prettier ribbon. As for the men who refused to sell indecencies which they were told to hawk around disguised as photos of the Tower of London or the Acropolis of Athens. . . . At least, let us be glad that England is full of young men and women whom the world will never hear of, but who prefer to go half-starved rather than to be degraded morally to the putrid level of the Lie which is expected to be part and parcel of their lives.

Could they do that unless they took GOD into consideration ? I don't expect so. But they do it. And even if they aren't so very clear about God, God is ' well pleased ' with them. He sees in them His beloved sons and daughters ' in whom He is well pleased.' He perceives a family likeness. He says : " That is true to Me. That is truthfulness. You are real. You do not clash." He sees men and women extricated from the mass of filth and fraud in which almost anything concerned with money-making-at-all-costs soon enough

enmires a man. I hope I have made myself clear. At the one end there is a sound instinct about Truth. At the other a clear, deep vision. From end to end reaches the probability that the truthful man will be a poor man, and earn God's special blessing.

If we approached the topic of lying from the angle of God's reality, which it flouts, we may reflect on chastity from that of God as Life and origin of all life. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the Christian does not consider chastity to be a negative virtue. It involves abstinence, but an abstinence which is intended to develop a positive quality, a likeness to God and union with Him—in short, 'more abundant life.' There is no point in being an old maid or an old bachelor as such, however impeccable may have been the career of each. All sexual activity is concerned with life; life is transmitted; life is originated. Now, there is no mystery at all comparable with life. Here is a thing that in every way we are unable to provide for ourselves. Chemical experiments have in reality gone no distance towards creating life in laboratories. Again, in all other departments our actions are concerned with what is already alive or, of course, with the inanimate, though you might for a moment think that education was a kind of

creation of life—mental life: providing ideas and motives. But no. The living mind has to be there already for the educator to work on. I need not enlarge upon how and why every sexual act is uniquely a vital one, and therefore as near to the divine activity as anything that can be thought of. It would be of interest to re-read St. John's Gospel simply from the point of view of 'life,' on which he so constantly dwells. True, he concentrates on the supernatural life of grace—'Eternal Life'—but in speaking of God, and of God's activity in the world, and of Christ's special gift, it is always in terms of life that he does so.

Hence it is not too much to say that we see from the most spiritual end of all that any use of sex which as it were devitalises it, is a misuse and a most horrible one. In these days, when sex is so very lightly spoken of, and sexual indulgence is actually recommended for the sake of psychological equipoise and so on, and repression and control are all but, if not quite, equated, it may seem fantastic to speak of sexual 'sin' as 'horrible,' or as sin at all; especially as, among the easy-going, it often does seem to make practically no difference to their general worth as men, provided sex has not shifted its centre of gravity, so to say, from the body to the mind. When it reaches the latter, its destructive

work is very rapid and shockingly easy to observe. Hence, in a way I am almost afraid of suggesting to the hitherto-thoughtless that the whole affair can and even should be looked at from a standpoint which has nothing to do with glands or nerves, or even what they call 'decency,' or even fidelity to a marriage promise given, but from the standpoint of God, who is Life, and Life as such. A man might easily say, "I shall be no better behaved a man after hearing and even admitting all that, because I am weak. But I shall be much more guilty a man, because I shall have far better reasons for not doing what I now do and am pretty sure to go on doing, because I can't help myself. I know myself too well." But, after all, even the noblest idea and the strongest motive seldom do their work all of a sudden. They take time. But if they are consistently attended to, they always conquer in the long run. Nor does God deny His Grace—and by Grace I here mean any special help ; because we are not allowing ourselves, in this book, to use explicitly Christian and supernatural arguments. Hence we have no right to refrain from appealing to what *is* noblest and truest and perfectly intelligible.

The inverse could, of course, be argued—that, could but the misuse of sex be cut out of the world, half the world's most life-destruc-

tive disease would also be removed. And again, half the human heartbreak of men's and women's lives would be removed if married fidelity were so much as expected and aimed at. It is indeed astounding to see a world so in love as ours is with counsels of death—contraception, abortion, sterilisation, euthanasia are, after all, forms of killing, however much they be urged as likely to improve life. And easy divorce simply increases the dreadful phenomenon of instability which is so marked to-day. Moral instability: even mental instability. No doubt 'weak-mindedness' is apparently increased because it is more attended to; and no doubt the 'poor' are mentally unstable and wavering in will because they are still so wickedly, erratically and deliberately ill- or under-fed. But not a little of the self-pity going around, which robs a man of any chance of setting his teeth and putting himself hard at his fences and holding down a job, is due to the chatter about 'complexes'—it is interesting to see that the only *sort* of complex about which anyone now talks glibly is the 'inferiority complex'; and abominable to find that the cinema, maybe, or the Sunday Press, or anyhow something or other, has enabled the simplest stoker to talk of complexes and give himself every opportunity of saying that he

'can't help it,' and so, of giving up trying. But every philosophy, every flattering psychoanalyst, three-quarters of the sex-books and even of the alleged 'health publications' (a revolting ramp and racket), are implementing instinct as against intelligence, and giving Spengler new grounds for arguing that the European race, if not the whole human race, is now dying out as fast as it can.

It may then be as well to emphasise, even with a certain bitterness, that those who uphold the ideal of chastity inside or outside of marriage do not do so because they are prudes, or timorous, or disappointed, or prurient, but because they see in it the most vital and vitalising force in the world, and directly associable by the intelligence with God's Life itself. One might almost say that this *must* be so, if only because something 'right' was required to correspond with all the manifestly 'wrong' sexual cults in antiquity. That they had gone crooked, astray, had become 'perverted,' few would deny. But the perversion was *from* something that was right. And the right element that survived in even the most perverted form—as true features must somehow survive in a caricature, else it is not even a caricature—was, the Mystery of Life. And the pervasive Life—*i.e.* presence and activity of God in the world—was recognised without

difficulty by practically every race, much as they may have misinterpreted and ill-symbolised it.

The Old Testament very nobly symbolises—almost by preference—the union between God and His people as a bridal one. The Hebrews *must* have seen in the (to us) erotic ‘Song of Solomon’ a symbolical religious tale, else it could simply not have got into the Canon of Scripture at all. Besides, idolatry is normally described as a ‘wantoning away from God.’ All this is lifted to a much higher plane by, for example, St. John in his Apocalypse, where the New Jerusalem is the Bride of the Lamb, and Imperial Rome is the World-Wanton: and by St. Paul, when, seeking for the best possible image of the union of the Graced Soul with God, of the Church with Christ, he can but appeal to the Sacrament of Christian marriage. Such leagues away is the Christian Church from slighting marriage. So immeasurably higher is its view of marriage than any other. That ‘celibacy’ entered upon for Christ’s sake may not be still higher is not a theme for argument in this book.

But that the Christian Church thinks ill of marriage or suggests that a completed and creative marriage is somehow not ‘chaste,’ is a calumny so wrong-headed that it is hard to

believe it honest. But you never know what people won't think next.

I conclude, therefore, by saying that those who think well of Chastity and would wish to be true to it, however difficult it may be to be so, will find their enterprise enormously simplified and implemented if they think of it in terms of God—Lord and Giver of Life, and Himself the very source and origin of all Life, being Life as such.

CHAPTER VIII

GOD AND HUMAN SOCIETY

I

WE may now, looking more widely, assert that the consequences of belief in God—in God such as we have endeavoured to present Him, and the meaning of that Name, to readers—have been of immeasurable value to the very idea of Man.

In ancient times the individual was not at all, or most inadequately, understood and appreciated. Deep schisms were cleft within the idea of human nature itself. The Hebrews thought of Man as genuinely Hebrew or non-Hebrew. Jew and Gentile were different in kind and in the very sight of God. The former were 'chosen,' and the others not. Even the Jew had his value more because he was a member of a people than on his own merits. Speaking without qualifications, we can say that the earlier period of Hebrew self-estimation was controlled by the view that the sins of the fathers should be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generations. There was enshrined in this a very admirable social sense; but that it was a lopsided view was evidenced by, for example, the Prophet Ezekiel, who, with real

fierceness, insisted that "the soul that sinneth, *it* shall die." That the fathers ate sour grapes and the children have their teeth set on edge, was no more to be a proverb in Israel. The Hebrew Scriptures, taken as a whole, are always counterbalancing one another; there is plenty, throughout them, about Hebrew and even human solidarity: but it is a critical error to suppose that, however personal a prophet or a psalmist may sound, his 'singular pronouns' always and only stand for the people. And no doubt, as Jews travelled and encountered other cultures, there was a tendency in a minority to wish to assimilate itself to the general culture of the period and to play up to those foreign conquerors who desired to bring Palestine into what seemed to them the only sensible and humane way of living. Such isolation was felt by them to be insane and most anti-social. In the last period the Sadducees and a few priests and kings fell in with this will to efface frontiers: the strange incident of the absolute fury which greeted the attempt to make Jewish young men do their athletics naked and to *wear hats* proves, however, that the mass of the people was not in the least prepared to fuse with anyone else.

Greek culture, on its side, regarded the

rest of the world as 'barbarian' and as not susceptible of freedom. You were a Hellene, or not.

But far deeper went the division of men into free by nature and slave by nature. Aristotle, after all a very great philosopher, could still hold that a farmer had three sorts of agricultural or pastoral instruments—inanimate, like wagons or ploughs; semi-animate, like oxen; and animate, like slaves. The armies of Alexander, which carried Greeks up into India, learnt a certain amount about human nature that had been hitherto unsuspected; but in proportion as Greek pride in Greek achievements faded into vanity due to the remembrance of the brief Greek creative period, the better understanding of Mankind remained defeated. Of course, when you come a little farther along, into the Roman period, you find a certain philosophic view about slaves coming into existence: slavery was regarded as instituted by Law, not as a consequence of Nature. Pathetic things were said about slaves, such as (by Seneca) that they were your 'humbler friends,' and that 'man to man was sacred.' But since the law was not altered, this made no great difference, if any, to the actual slaves. A master had the right to crucify the whole of his staff if he

suspected that one of them had murdered someone, and were not sure which slave had done it. One magnate crucified thus 400 slaves. You can walk into pagan Rome down that avenue of crosses.

Then Christianity appeared. It insisted that all men were equally created by God, and were being preserved by Him ; had not only—what even the pagans were arguing—the gift of intelligence, but were destined by God to immortality. It proceeded to say that men were not only by nature creatures of God, but were, or were meant to be, adopted into sonship with Him : that in Jesus Christ all men had become, at least potentially, brothers ; more, that, being incorporated into Christ, they were all members of His Body, and so, members of one another.

A double affirmation was thus set forth, as the necessary consequence of believing in Christ at all—the value of the individual was incalculable and inviolable, since it was that which God, his Creator and Preserver, put upon him ; and that no Christian individual could live properly otherwise than in a Society. Three things are, for the Christian, incontrovertible. First, that God is paramount. Second, that the individual is worth

what God sees him to be. Third, that no individual is self-sufficient, but is constructed alike by Nature and by Grace to lead a 'social life.'

The whole of this is, if the words be properly thought out, involved in Christ's great embracing yet cleaving statement that we must render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and to God what is God's. I called this statement 'embracing,' or inclusive, because it cuts out neither of the two ends, whether human or divine. I also called it 'cleaving,' because it implies most clearly that Cæsar is not God. The confusion in which the early Christian lived was due, precisely, to the Cæsar's saying he *was* God. The Roman citizen was asked, in every department of life—army, civil service, social, convivial—to offer incense to the Cæsar as to God. The Christian refused. Hence the first great persecutions.

God is paramount. No Cæsar, nor any version of him, no State, no Government, is God.

None the less, a Cæsar did exist. A State, a Government, will always—we may hesitatingly hope—always exist. None of them are God, but all derive a true departmental authority from God. Within that sphere, every Christian is bound to obey.

St. Peter and St. Paul wrote the most vigorous sentences about obedience to authority, when the actual authority was the neurotic genius Nero, who put Christians, soaked in tar, blazing down his garden-walks. The one thing they could not give up to him was their conscience. "We must obey God rather than men," should those two authorities clash. God cannot usurp: men constantly do.

There is therefore, because of God, something inviolable and treasurable beyond words in the individual. I have to confess that I cannot easily see how this value of the individual can be maintained if his God-createdness, God-preservedness, and divine destiny be disregarded. Caiaphas said that it was expedient that "one man should die for the people." Several modern systems are even more determined that any amount of individuals should be so subordinate to the State that they all, if not die, retain practically no separate personality of any sort.

This might be said to be, by a quaint paradox, much what St. Paul meant when he cried out that henceforward those old divisions existed no more: "*Now* there exists no more Jew versus Gentile, Greek versus Barbarian, free man versus slave, nay, not so much as male versus female"—you are

all one thing, one person, within Christ Jesus. And indeed the 'perfect society,' the Church, conceived as the mystical Body of Christ, had been created. But, I repeat, I cannot draw too much upon Christian principles in this book, nor, at this point, need I. It is on the worth of the individual that I am just now insisting, and the early Christian apologists derived this more from the fact that all men were (as pagan philosophers too had said) endowed with reason and able to be 'virtuous,' and, that they were all sons of one and the self-same Father, God, and destined to immortality.

Long before the Christians became powerful enough to alter legislation, the life of the disinherited began to be altered as from within: the Epistle to Philemon shows how the slave's status was transformed for the true Christian not because of the Law, but because of God and His Christ. Similarly, the essential value of women, children, the weak, the helpless generally, began to be changed owing simply to the pressure of the interior principle.

3

But the moment that the Church left the catacombs, she did begin to try to incarnate her principles in laws, especially as the enthusiasm of the earliest days was inevitably dwindling and running every risk the moment it became normal, or fashionable, or even remunerative to become a Christian.

The collection of these laws gradually made up 'Canon Law.' Moreover, the principles preached by the Church, and the laws imposed by her on conscience, became those also of the Christian State, and 'Christendom' came into existence, a living unit, having of course its material coefficient, but also its spiritual one, each 'independent' in its own sphere, each 'perfect,' yet combined as body and soul are in the living man. But the spiritual element retained its supremacy. Neither God nor Conscience could be subject to the temporal authority as such.

This supremacy of the spiritual, and the consequent inviolability of the individual were, said A. J. Carlyle, "a new principle in the Western World. . . . It is one aspect and not the least important of a new development of the significance of human personality, of a new conception of Liberty. . . . The equality of human nature is indeed the doc-

trine which is assumed by all the Canonists as the fundamental principle of human life: the equality of all men, as the children of one Father." And Gierke * says, "Even a fugitive glance at mediæval doctrine suffices to show how through it all, in sharp contrast to the theories of antiquity, runs the thought of the imperishable and absolute value of the individual: a thought revealed by Christianity and grasped in all its profundity by the mediæval spirit. That every individual, by virtue of his eternal destination, is at the core something holy and indestructible even in relation to the highest power: that the smallest part has a value of its own, and not merely as a part of the whole: that every man is to be regarded by the community, never as an instrument only [contrast Aristotle, p. 177], but also as an end—all this is not merely suggested, but . . . expressed."

Nor was this, of course, in any way the *invention* of the Middle Ages. It was then that what had been obscurely felt, casually alluded to, and imperfectly formulated yet stated always with substantial exactness, reached its adequately worked-out formulas. "The two principles," says Carlyle again, "in which we most clearly recognise the

* *Political Theories of the Middle Age*, translated by Maitland. (Cambridge University Press)

difference between the ancient world and the modern are—first, the recognition of the essential equality of men in virtue of their common powers of reason and morality, and secondly, the principle which arises out of this, the necessary freedom of the spiritual and moral life. . . . It was fortunate that Pope Gelasius had, as early as the fifth century, formulated in such clear terms the autonomy of the two powers. . . . The Middle Ages remained faithful to the Gelasian principle that each power, the temporal and the spiritual, derives its authority from God, and that neither power has authority over the other in matters which belong to its own sphere.”

It would be interesting to follow out the struggle of these living principles with a recalcitrant social material during the actual Roman Empire, pagan or Christian (*e.g.* Diocletian and Constantine); during the period of the barbarian invasions; during the formative period of Christendom when the question of Emperor and Pope was paramount (I cannot dwell on the affair of Byzantium nor yet even the much-misunderstood character of Charlemagne and the position he would have liked to occupy, nor yet of the nature of the divine-human head-supreme of Islam); and during the disruptive period

that followed these. What symbolised that, was the fact that Canon Law became separated from Civil Law. The spiritual and civic life of man no more interpenetrated each the other, but became, at best, parallel ; more usually, in conflict.

The sense of nationality had developed till a point was reached where nationalism came into existence. Now, you will find that all (I think) words that end in -ism denote something departmental, and so, shrunken in comparison with what can take the whole view into account. Kings tried to be absolute, even in the realm of spirit—that is, of thought, choice, and of conscience. Henry II had been a spectral anticipation of Henry VIII, who, because of a woman, or indeed a series of them, threw off all spiritual allegiance inasmuch as it could interfere with his personal determinations. He who declared himself Defender of the ancestral Faith, defied it. “*Cuius regio, eius religio*”—Faith depends on frontiers—was a cynical formula invented about that time. Christendom, of course, was shattered. Nothing any more existed, nor now exists, into whose name the Name of Christ is incorporated : which bases its multiplex unity on union with Christ. Despite theist and deist theories, a unity based upon God, and sonship in God, brotherhood

consequently in God, has not since then developed itself. Every imaginable theory, since the days of the Encyclopædists with the French Revolution on the top of them, has endeavoured to weld nations, and even the world, into unity: none of them has come to anything, primarily because they have not taken God, Father of all men equally, into account.

The “*Liber et Legalis Homo*”—that perfect mediæval phrase—has disappeared from our consciousness as completely as, for example, the yeoman class has disappeared from our land. The man, spiritual and therefore free—law-abiding because a free member of a free community—is not what we are accustomed to nowadays; and we see less and less of him.

To-day it seems to me that, on the whole, it is the value of the individual on which emphasis needs to be put. Of course all men feel within themselves that they (i) exist: (ii) are separate and, in a sense, complete ‘persons’ with rights: and yet (iii) owe a debt to the community, and in various ways should subordinate themselves to it, and yet must not be obliterated by it. Therefore they drift off into rival camps, declaring that Communism and Fascism (in the sense of ‘one man’s dictatorship,’ into which that

word has unwarrantably and even grotesquely been forced) are the only options. A taxi-driver recently said very sensibly to me (because I had told him that my companion in the taxi was a fierce Red), "Listen to me, sir: when we haven't got what we want, we are all of us Communists. When we have, we are all of us Capitalists." There was a lot of sound sense and psychology in that.

But I must not be drawn from my subject too far, which is, that belief in God rescues both individual and Society.

Undoubtedly the individual. If you see your fellow-man equally with yourself a son of God, having the value that God puts on him, you cannot think of him as your 'thing,' your possession—let alone as your material for exploitation. He is not a mere 'hand,' nor a 'cog,' nor a number within the tremendous number of those human creatures who compose a 'State'—than which an oligarchy (especially an oligarchy itself dictated to by money) is more different than anything else possibly can be. I recur to this below. The old 'liberal' doctrine *laissez faire*, meaning *laissez moi faire*, issues into nothing but 'each man for himself and the weakest to the wall,' which is a denial not only of the value of the individual, but also

of a living 'society' as such. Seneca was leagues ahead of that old Manchester, when he said: "Homo res sacra homini": Man to man is sacred. Sacred. Set aside in the ultimate recesses of his nature for God. I honestly cannot regard a man as sacred because he is set aside for, and at the free disposal of Parliament, the London County Council, or a borough council, or a parochial institution.

Now, it is dismally clear that to-day in almost every department things are being 'taken over' by collectivities. Personality is not only at a discount, but disapproved of, and indeed eliminated. Mr. E. L. Hasluck recently (1936) wrote a book on *Local Government in England*, in which he asked how many ratepayers knew so much as who fixed their rates, let alone why and how. This makes one ask if collectivities—*i.e.* understudies of a true Society—oughtn't to be taken into account?

Of course they should. Save when God, who is unique, is spoken to, the pronouns in the Our Father are all of them plural. *Our* daily bread. *Our* trespasses. Indeed, *our* Father. Sons of one Father are brothers of one another. Brothers of one Brother are brothers too of one another. We keep coming back to the double aboriginal Chris-

tian principle. The inviolable value of the individual, as child of God; and the co-corporation—actual or desired—of all men—in Christ.

The Apostle, then, of the Almighty State and the individualist are equally—exactly equally—wrong. Each sacrifices one half of reality. We have said a little of what is increasing nowadays—the massacre of the individual for the sake of the ‘State’—inverted commas, because in the concrete the ‘State’ means the Government, and the Government means a few men in ‘power’; and, men in power being helpless, the Government means an immense bureaucracy.

Take education. When we were in S. Africa, that part of the world was aiming at its special version of the endeavour of all modern States—to get all education into its hands. In Disraeli’s time, our Government acknowledged that the only reason why ‘voluntary’ schools were allowed at all was, that the Government could not afford to put up enough of its own. Disraeli mocked this. He saw that the nonconformist hated the Established Church on social grounds: that the older Protestantism hated Catholics because of a corrupt imagination. Each, to defeat the Establishment and to injure the Catholics yet further, tried to obtain a State

education. Well, when I was in S. Africa, an eminent educationist quoted as an ideal: "The State must *impose its* ideas on the rising generation." He contrasted the one-way mental traffic of Sparta with the looser mentality of Athens. At that time, all African schools were to be governmental schools: all training-schools for teachers were to be State-schools: even, all school books were to be 'passed' by Government. And even, University professors were to be appointed governmentally. On that rock the scheme for governmental mind-unification was shattered. The Universities (chiefly a Calvinist one, if I remember right) said, "We will choose our professors because they are the best at their job that we can get, and not because they please politicians." Excellent.

In our own land, a man was found to say—when protests were uttered about the shocking conditions in which soft timber was obtained from Russia, that a firm had no call to inquire into the conditions in which commodities were obtained, but was asked to see only that its clients got what they wanted. The head, too, of a munitions firm was found to say that such a firm had no "national or political prejudices," and that it left words like justice to 'idle or metaphysical' minds.

(And we all are able, if we choose, to know a good deal of the background of the war between Paraguay and Bolivia.) And another S. African personage declared that the white man was *there*, and intended to remain there, and if possible as boss, no arguments about the 'rights of man' and so forth being allowed to interfere.

I hope that the obscenity of all such sentences is patent. You have here the expression of sub-human mentalities. We say 'sub-human,' because they defy even the herd-instinct. They certainly defy all notion of an organised society. They run counter to the obviously best and most constructive tendencies that are innermost in all decent men. They express, moreover, a determination which is not only murderous, because it destroys society both in the past and the future, but suicidal, because the ruin that action based on such notions is already provoking will involve those who entertain those notions in its own catastrophe.

But now, having condemned such villainies in the strongest possible terms, and having expressed alike our moral disgust and intellectual contempt for them, it is again our duty to say, before anyone else, and as loudly as we can, that we, who profess to believe in God and in Christ, have acted hardly other-

wise. I would not be surprised if those whom we have quoted went to church and made charitable gifts, or anyway bequests. I know, too, that there are others, who neither go to church nor profess any definite belief, who would execrate those brutal sentiments and are 'humane' in a very true sense, for the sake, precisely, of the derided sense of justice that is theirs, and of their true fellow-feeling for all living men. We do honour to the non-believer who so acts and feels, and humiliate ourselves the more profoundly.

The more we declare ourselves obedient to a creed, the more clearly we can see, intellectually, that God exists, and that, in consequence, all our estimates of human things ought to begin from God's end, so to say—the more shockingly anomalous has been the behaviour of the mass of us believers.

Those responsible, a hundred years ago, for the atrocious conditions of factories, were presumably Christians: modern wars, at least in the West, have been fought between Christian countries, or at least between countries containing many Christians. Communism has arisen in countries where there had been Christian traditions and conventions. True, we had witnessed a series of governments abroad that were anti-clerical. It is absurd to say that the Church in France,

Spain, Italy, Germany, or indeed anywhere had had, for many centuries, a perfectly free hand. Often enough she did her work in chains. It remains that if the mass of Christians had lived up to the one half of their professed principles, they could have prevented governments, or capitalists, or gangs of financiers, from very much of that grasp and grab which have been responsible for the oppression of millions of citizens within the several realms, and for the wars that have brought misery to whole tribes and races. Governments—and practically any collectivity of men, like a committee or a board—are always more cynical than the decent man taken by himself; but not even governments, in possession of money and guns, can act for long at a time directly in opposition to the popular opinion and will.

This is why more than ever we need, in the world, a 'change of heart' among great quantities of men. Desire for wealth and power, coupled with a readiness to use force, will always bring things back to where they were, whatever be the theoretic system under which a land is governed. Few facts are more impressive than the rapid disappearance of idealistic Communism from Russia. That country is more nationalist than ever it was; more militarist; doubtless in process of

being more hygienic, cleaned up, more consistently dictated to in details of daily life as in general matters; but along with that process is no symptom of kindlier feeling towards anyone. Probably never has hate been preached so openly and so violently, nor implemented by crime on a wider scale. And, indeed, the doctrine of State Absolutism and the effacement of family-love and respect for the individual as such bear no relation to what we have called a change of heart or the creation of a right *will* within the individual. Of course, the Communist promise of an earthly paradise, made to men who had never been allowed to form acts of will in all their history, does at first provide the imagination with a vision, and to sedulously suppressed enthusiasms, it offers an objective.

You may even find a certain austerity of morals coming into existence for State reasons. A highly-placed Russian educational official told a friend of ours that education in Russia was now aiming at the elimination of drunkenness, *for* the drunkard was of no service to the State: and again, of casual immorality, for the loose-liver could not be relied on by authority: and again, of religion, not because he hated it (as many do), but because he could see no use in it for State purposes. Hence religion (he said with

partial accuracy even so far as Russia goes) was not being actively persecuted any more in Russia (though such persecutions have had to be engineered elsewhere, for example, in Spain, and probably will be again in Russia), but, was not being *taught*. Hence 'religion' was already middle-aged and could be trusted to die out. But, then, it cannot. It always reappears, and, when in no way intellectually controlled and to some degree canalised, it breaks out in vaporous and fantastic ways, as is already happening in Russia, even in the Red Army. Semi-mystical lawless sects are coming to life again; and I sincerely expect that the Russian Government will in due course have to accept religion as a fact, and to go to some personal sort of Canossa. In fact, given the Russian temperament, I should not wonder if Russia became, some day, a religious leader in the world. Just when, in ancient Rome, religion seemed to have become completely ossified, the Bacchanal scare broke out, and was followed, despite stern legislation, by a perfect orgy of emotional and even un-Roman cults, like those of Isis, Cybele and a host of oriental deities, most of them unmanageable because so neurotic.

We want, then, to urge that the State itself would be wise to reverse its process, and,

far from trying to eliminate religion (always a hopeless job), or even to fillet it, so to say, and to get rid of any distinctive features in any version of it—somewhat as in decaying Rome everything was admitted, nothing was denied, and all gods melted into the golden haze enveloping the Sun-God—it ought to make the most of any sincere religion that it may contain, as a uniquely steadying and also inspiring influence.

I have certainly not disguised that I am a Catholic and write as one. It follows that I hold the Christian Creed as taught by the Catholic and Roman Church to be the sole adequate, comprehensive, and truly authoritative expression of Christ's revelation and creation. Therefore I cannot for a moment be supposed to desire all sorts of varieties of religion to co-exist in a State or in the world. But I am thinking of a State which professes no particular religion, like our own. It has been authoritatively decided that the Law of England is not Christian as such—not but what its origin was altogether Catholic, as we have seen. The Cross could not be put upon the Cenotaph. Neither, of course, was the Crescent, let alone the hammer and sickle. But I am urging a minimum, which is, that any Government, not being doctrinaire and partisan, ought to take religion into account,

and foster any of its expressions which are not manifestly and essentially anti-social. Of course, if a Government says (as many have said) that Christianity is essentially anti-social, because belief in God, conscience, Christ and a future life denies and destroys the absolute autocracy of the Government, we acknowledge that they do so, but say that such a Government is radically wrong in wishing to be autocratic also in affairs of conscience.

We re-insist that there is no way of treating human creatures properly, save by beginning at God's end. They were not made by Governments, any more than by chance. They do not belong to no one—they do not just drift vaguely through the universe; but neither do they belong to any of their fellow-men or group of their fellow-men. Fellow-men *are* fellow-men, and have no absolute rights over one another. But God has equal rights over all. To disregard these rights, and the destiny that they imply, is not only to commit sacrilege against God, not only to commit the worst of idolatries—namely, the adoration of one's own human nature at the very moment when one is exploiting the human nature that exists no less in one's subordinates—but to take the quickest road towards the destruction of human society

itself, and so, of all the individuals who compose it.

To eliminate God, or even, when seeking for the proper method of dealing with one's fellow-men, to begin anywhere save from God, is to ensure the economic, cultural, political and social destruction of that part of the world in which so martyred a society exists. As for human happiness, we have already tried to show how impossible it is if it tries to construct itself out of human elements merely. Indeed, I cannot conceive what insanity it is that makes us try to do so! I should have thought that the mystery of 'my' existence, my thinking existence, my 'self-hood,' would have become so appalling (especially if I held that suicide was no way out of it—because what vestige of proof have I that to destroy my body destroys *me*? and indeed what adamant proofs I have that it does no such thing!) that I would feel myself trapped at all points, and at best go off my head.

Happily we are human, and cannot help remaining so, and need not, therefore, expect to meet our doom within a mechanised State. Unless Man literally dies out, the future State itself will be a human institution; and if he does, there obviously will not be a State at all. It is just in proportion as a State has

tried to dehumanise man, to interfere with him, or strip him of various human activities of which religion is the most essential, that it has tended to reduce itself and its component members (for I could not call the individual in an absolute State a true 'citizen') to disintegration.

4

Now, there are those who think that the more religion is persecuted, the more it flourishes and becomes genuine. "The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church." That blood may merit great graces from God, and the grace of a true re-birth of religion, but of itself I do not think that the natural consequences of persecution are happy ones. Cardinal Newman did not, if I remember right, so think. Persecuted humanity loses heart, waits for the end, and in great numbers apostatises. At the other extreme, religion pampered by the State slacks off, as do all over-fed organisms. It is bad for the Church to be very rich, and for her prelates to hold high positions of a purely worldly sort. What is good for the Church is freedom, an austere yet humane priesthood, and the full preaching of her doctrine of man's divine filiation and brotherhood in Christ. That is when the true philanthropy displays itself and unfurls

its full energy. The thirteenth century provided every needed example of this. This is when, for example, hospitals and universities were developed all over Europe, and we put the two together because we do not wish it to be supposed that 'philanthropy' is concerned only with what is sick. It nurtures also, and primarily, what is sound. Not but what the hospitals themselves were breeding-fields of sheer knowledge and discovery, of which experience so much was forgotten owing to the snobbishness of the Renaissance, which liked to pretend that nothing had happened since the days of that Greek culture to which it plumed itself it was giving a new birth. I should prefer to say that what the Renaissance did provide was original, and ran the greatest risks of extinction almost at birth by the movement becoming, indeed, so largely imitative. But that is a digression. It can truly be said that all great creative movements have been also apostolic, *i.e.* missionary, *i.e.* devoting themselves to the well-being of living humanity, and that they have been so always because they saw in man what was greatest—that is, as we have so often said, his value from God's end, and through and in God, and his brotherhood in Christ. That is why a St. Vincent de Paul or a St. Francis Xavier or a St. Francis of Assisi or a

St. John Bosco did a million times more and more lasting work for their fellow-man than did any of the contemporary States, or than modern revolutionary States are doing. I would far rather be nursed by a woman who knew, of course, her work, but who nursed me for the love of God (however repulsive or ungrateful I was), than by anyone who regarded me as part of her 'duty' merely, or a case, or a job.

We should have thought that any observer, however superficial, of human nature and history would have detected the radical difference, the essential difference of kind, between work which is genuinely done from a spiritual motive and with an ultimately spiritual aim, and work which is deprived of these. Why, you detect the difference in the very workers themselves! The whole impression made by and gathered from a man or woman in whom the spiritual fact is alive is precisely one of a different sort of vitality which, for example, the amusing or charming or erudite or beautiful but unspiritual man or woman never does nor can transmit. It may be, no doubt, that what you in no way possess, you cannot see nor recognise, and even if you do see it—which unless you are somehow paralysed you cannot but do—you can attach no meaning to it, and any outward phenomena

proper to it are bound to be attributed by you to other causes, usually most inadequate. We said above that one who has never experienced anything that can in any way be called 'mystical' will not admit that there are such people as mystics, and will insist on ascribing the phenomena special to them to something quite different, like hysteria or a 'dual personality,' whatever that may really mean.

It remains that he who has fully assimilated the truth that he is the creature of God, and preserved and destined by and for Him, and that all his fellow-men and women are so too, and knows that his and their well-being and happiness depend wholly on their fulfilling God's purpose in themselves, will hunger and thirst to assist them to do so. By example, by word, and by all manner of service. By example, naturally—not by flaunting a kind of placard of what you ought to be and are not, but by *being* right so far as possible yourself. It is true that what you are communicates itself and influences all that comes into any real contact with it; but your 'good example' will be rather an affair of 'letting your light shine' than of flashing it deliberately into people's eyes. 'Giving edification' is not a very palatable expression, though one sees what it means, or should mean.

It may be by word, when words are called for, without human respect, as without unkindness, pompousness or affection, or talking beyond your knowledge—yet ever seeking for the due opportunity of communicating that good thing which is yours. If this be called ‘propaganda,’ let it be! I repeat, if I have a good thing, I want to share it. If it is a spiritual good thing, all the more do I want to share it. If I don’t, that is either due to my English sheepishness, or because I am not really clear what it is or whether I’ve got it at all. Seeing that this country is a perfect mass of propaganda, and that no one seems to mind much if Communism propagates itself by every imaginable means—and quite consistently, if it believes in itself—and that our Press has hardly bleated when it knows perfectly well of Moscow broadcasts from and about Spain, including the order to ‘shoot all priests’—it is not only illogical, but shockingly dishonest, if anyone accuses a believer in God or Christ of disgraceful propaganda should he try by every means in his power to spread his knowledge and to share his treasure.

And by service. *Any* service. Our Lord mentioned the ‘cup of cold water’ which was the un-refusable minimum gift under the blazing skies of Palestine. He made a whole catalogue of kind actions—feeding the

hungry, clothing the naked, befriending the lonely—and then very much astonished those who had performed them by saying that He regarded them as done to Himself. It is very good to attempt the greater things—to co-operate with the building of decent houses with rents payable by the very poor—‘human’ houses, and not the sort put up by the officially benevolent who none the less make a very good thing off them : but if I cannot tackle such tasks, the kindnesses of every day will not ‘lack their reward’ : the ‘charity of Christ’ will give me no peace till I yield to its urgency : and what reward do I so much as wish for, save the well-being, temporal and eternal, of my fellow-man, God’s child, whom I seek to assist ?

CHAPTER IX

GOD AND PRAYER

WE can think of no better way of concluding this short book than by asking ourselves how Christ wished us to think of God.

Without the slightest fear of 'anthropomorphism,' indeed, encouraging us to pray human-wise just as everything else we do is human, He makes us call him 'Father,' and Father of all of us, as well as of each. The very first words, then, of the 'Our Father' proclaim our human solidarity in God. But forthwith He makes us forget ourselves, and offer to God that worship which, as we said, should be our first and fundamental reaction to Him, the first step in our approach to Him. 'Fear,' in the sense of awe and reverence—as far as possible from alarm, but acknowledging that we are fully cognisant of the infinite difference between Himself and us. We place ourselves where we should be—on the knees of our soul, as low as possible before the Most High, to whom, however, we now (the Christian is taught) have unimpeded access and freedom of speech.

But—so at least I think—even as "Our

Father who art in heaven ” is a phrase which continues its influence throughout the sentences that follow, so too “on earth as it is in heaven ” is a clause that qualifies all that precedes it. Be that Name, that very Self of God ‘hallowed’ *in* itself, as indeed it deserves to be, but also, on this earth where we are, and where it is not so hallowed by all men, nor in any way comparable with the perfect worship of heaven. Our Lord, with, so to call it, complete realism, does not wish us so to keep our eyes fixed upon the heavens as to forget where we are, and where we must live and work. “Why stand ye gazing into heaven?” And Peter was forbidden to make his three tents on the Mount of Transfiguration.

In heaven, again, the reign of God is prevailing, and meets with no rebellion: here it is constantly resisted by the misuse of man’s free will. We are taught to pray for its full triumph, and I have no doubt but that the Twelve, to whom in the first instance the Prayer was taught, always from the outset thought of themselves as not only—as in their simplicity they did think, and could hardly help thinking—holding high posts within the Kingdom, but as co-operating in the bringing it into existence. Hence it would seem to me that the Lord’s Prayer is

from the outset by no means only an other-worldly one, but an apostolic one. The Christian is from the very outset caused to turn his eyes to earth and to his fellow-men, and to foresee himself as labouring among them for God. Throughout His Ministry, though especially in the central part of it, Our Lord was occupied with, precisely, that Kingdom and what really He meant by it. He was diverting the Jewish gaze from the materialist, nationalist vision on which they concentrated it. The Kingdom upon earth is to be a direct result of that awe for God, that hallowing of His Name with which the prayer begins. This is one reason why Our Lord needed so little to speak about details. The difference upon earth was not to consist so much in exterior things as such, as in the infusing of the fear of God into every part of life, transforming all of life from within. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these other things shall be added unto you." Where justice and truth, mercy and charity, are triumphing, the transformation of every part of social life will proceed. I do not hesitate to say that in proportion as the artist, even, keeps his soul humble before God, so far as he knows Him, and his will in harmony with God's will, so far as he is aware of it, his

very art will become 'inspired' and better *as* art, than it would be were his outlook merely earth-bound or his ideal only sensual. I do not mean that the spiritual artist will paint more religious pictures, nor even that he will hold any particular form of creed; but I do maintain that when you listen to music or look at pictures, you can often feel that *here* the artist has something truly spiritual stirring within him, and *there* his wings have failed him and he has sunk. You can actually say that only the artist whose eye is capable of 'seeing God' is able to paint what is really wicked and corrupt. The picture of an evil subject, done by a stupid painter anxious only to make money, would not be 'corrupt' in the sense in which I use that word. The Kingdom therefore starts from within, but works always outwards until the heaven has accomplished its entire work. It will constantly express itself in outward forms and even formulas; but even the most orthodox of men, the most respectable in behaviour, will not be a member of that kingdom unless first and throughout him the Holy Spirit be breathing.

The same really applies to the petition that God's will may be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Possibly the 'kingdom' turns the

eye to earth, and to God reigning therein; the word 'will' more directly to God, reigning in heaven and earth alike. Realm and reign, both unintelligible without the King.

The eye then turns to the petitioner, and again the pronouns are in the plural, as we have already noticed. I doubt whether the petition means more than "Give us constantly what we need"; perhaps lessons of asceticism should not be drawn from the word 'bread,' as though it implied that God's servants would be content with the very simplest food. No doubt they will be, and in proportion as they draw close to God will actually prefer a life of extreme detachment. They will, however, as St. Paul was to put it, know both how to abound and how to do without. None the less, the little phrase does suggest, first, that we are to ask for what is enough, not what is superfluous, and certainly, that we beg God to supply it. Money, food, lodging, raiment, are not to bulk large in the Christian's life, as Our Lord makes very clear elsewhere. It is not on them that the attention should be fixed. Luxury, I hold, is out of place in the Christian. We are to seek *first* the Kingdom of God, and "all those other things" shall accrue to us—at least, as far as we need

them, are helped by them, or any more desire them. The tone of this petition seems to me to provide a sort of vision of a life in which there is no fret: a life therefore in which desires are few: the "full measure, pressed down and running over" will not be full of those material superfluities which are, precisely, what Our Lord says make salvation itself so difficult for the rich. Again, it is by beginning at God's end that we shall interpret properly this sentence. And when we know God more intimately, we shall see that He Himself will not be anxious to give us a multiplicity of material objects, nor shall we wish for them. Our desire will have changed over towards Himself. "What have I in heaven but Thee, and what is there on earth that can be compared with Thee?"

"Forgive us our debts," we continue, "even as we forgive our debtors." Our trespasses or transgressions always imply a taking from God that which He deserves in the line of total service; a debt is thus constituted which we never can repay, because not only God has to give us anything that we give to Him—all our 'sufficiency' is from God: and then, if I have stolen say an hour from His service, well, the next hour and all ensuing hours are already due

to Him on their own account, so we cannot use *them* for the paying off of ancient debts.

But what we are taught to assume in this petition is, that God can and is anxious to *forgive*. Not—that totally different thing—to condone. By ‘condone’ we mean merely to wash a thing out: to pretend it never happened: to annul it *sans façons*. God, the absolute Truth, cannot do that. But He can forgive, and, what is more, help us to make use even of those past sins that we must learn to repent. “To them that love Him,” says St. Paul, “God makes everything to work together for good”—“even sins,” adds St. Augustine, speaking from experience as well as theologically.* Now, what possible reason can there be for God’s being *trustable* thus to forgive our worst offences, save that He “loves us with an everlasting love”? He loves us all the time, even, of the sin. He loves us even while it is unrepented: for, since in all things God comes first and takes the initiative, why should we so much as repent were it not that His gentle plucking at our robe, His innermost summoning—in a word, His

* We hold that the neuter verb, “All things work together for good,” is a mistranslation. God actively *makes them do so*

Grace—invigorate us to do so ? “ We love Him, because He *first* loved us.”

But observe our grim temerity. We condition our forgiving by God. We ask Him to forgive us because we habitually do something on our side. We forgive others. We forgive those others who are in debt to us, who have injured us. How many of us, who say the Our Father, concentrate upon that clause ? There is a whole parable about the servant who was forgiven much and refused to forgive a little. Nothing that we need to forgive can begin to be compared with what requires to be forgiven by God to us. However little we know about God, we have an instinct that what is owed to God is different in kind from what is owed to ‘ anyone else.’ *Nil simile aut secundum*, said the pagan and often frivolous Horace. Nothing is ‘ like ’ Him : nothing comes even *second* to Him—simply because in this case there are not two of a sort. The Nature of God, and our obligation to God, are unique. Yet, even so, He can be trusted to forgive, and trusted because He *loves*, which is more than can be said about earthly creditors—or debtors ! *Odisse quem læseris*, said another pagan—Hate the man you’ve hurt.

The last petition is : “ Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil ”—

from evil in general; or, from the Evil One—Satan, the Tempter by profession.

There have been those who jib at the very idea of God's 'leading' us into temptation. At the back of this is the Hebrew habit of putting everything down directly to its first Cause. (And indeed to say: 'God sends the rain' is far more accurate than to say 'Nature, in obedience to her laws, makes it impossible but that it should rain.' 'It'! To say, 'God made Man,' is far more sensible than to say, 'Man is due to Evolution.' Nature! Evolution! What are these personified and canonised abstractions?) It is true to say that God made us such as to be open to solicitations this way and that in our will. Our will is 'free,' which means that it is not coerced to choose this way or that. In consequence of this our nature, once we or our ancestors have sinned, we have a certain tendency to move towards what our sensual nature presents to us, if only because, as we said, sense and imagination always come and must come before reflection on them.

But the meaning of the words is quite plain. Help us when we are tempted. Help us when we are (which is very good for us tried and tested. We have again and again recognised that we have no power of our-

selves, as of ourselves. All our 'sufficiency,' to re-quote that, is from God. God will not "allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear; but, with the temptation, will provide an issue—a way of escape"—better, a means of victory (1 Cor. x. 13). We do not at all like owning up that in many ways we have put ourselves at the disposal of the Evil Thing that exists in the world, whether we mean by that the Evil Spirit who is at the back of all evil, or the sheer fact of evil which none can deny is a world-element. Even pleasure as such—pleasure which is not an evil thing in itself. But, as Aristotle says, we do not accept pleasure *adekastoi*—without having given pledges, hostages to it, as we have not to pain. Few would want to do a bad painful thing: when a thing is pleasurable, and when we have experienced how pleasurable pleasure is, we are predisposed to disregard any bad element that this or that pleasure may contain. Deliver us from the cheats of him who was a 'liar from the beginning'! Such are some of the thoughts inspired by the 'Our Father.'

It is of interest to see how, as a matter of fact, the Church has addressed herself to God.*

* The material composing this section will be found, more elaborated, in *The Words of the Missal*, Sheed and Ward, pp. 76-86.

It is important to arrive at prayer in a proper way; and the proper way is always to be in a right attitude towards God rather than in an inevitable attitude towards our personal problems and desires. I mean, it is far better to enter into prayer with our mind on God, than concentrating either upon self or self-regarding things.

The wise, grave, reticent Roman liturgy—on which all later liturgical prayer is based—tries always, therefore, at the beginning of its prayers to put us in a right attitude towards God. True, at times it begins, going straight to the point, quite simply with the words: ‘O God . . .’ That is what He is in Himself. At other times the Liturgy says, ‘O Lord’—that is what He is towards *us*. Or it combines the two. Again, it may add a tiny word—‘O Lord, *our* God.’ We appropriate Him. “I will be their God, and they shall be My People.” “Go—say . . . I ascend to your Father and My Father; to My God and your God!” Though God ‘fathers’ even those who have no idea that they are His sons, yet there is, clearly, a special intimacy between Him and those who know they are.

At other times the Liturgy adds an epithet. ‘Almighty God—Everlasting God—O Saving, Rescuing God.’ And again, ‘O God

most merciful': and, reverting to what we must never forget: 'O God most Holy'—God, utterly separate, even as indescribably immanent. Nothing is left out.

But these are almost 'official' ways of approaching God. Here are yet other ways in which the Church's prayers begin—

O God, unchanging Power and Light eternal—the Strength of them that trust in Thee—Protector of those who hope in Thee—without whom nothing is strong, nothing holy—O God of all Power, to whom belongeth every excellent thing—O God, our Refuge and our Strength: O God, the Restorer and Lover of innocence—Almighty, everlasting God, Consolation of the sorrowful, Strength of those that toil—O God, Thou Exaltation of the humble and Strength of them that stand upright—Almighty everlasting God, sole Hope of all the world—God, Glory of the faithful and Life of the righteous—God, Shepherd and Ruler of the faithful—God, Maker and Lover of peace—God, by whose decrees the moments of our life run out—unique Safeguard of human weakness—Lover and Guardian of peace—generous Giver of pardon and Lover of man's salvation—O God, whom to love with heart and mind is righteousness (this is a translation of *amare et diligere*: both words

mean 'to love,' for which we have not two adequate words with which to express the Latin. *Amare* means rather to love 'with affection'; *diligere*, to love 'by preference,' intelligently to single out for our devotion).

These are, so to say, terse titles: but sometimes a whole relative sentence is used for *describing* the God to whom we are about to pray, and thus, for filling our minds with an antecedent sentiment in regard of Him. "O God, who seest that we are broken down with our adversities—who controllest alike the things of heaven and those of earth—who seest well that we draw confidence from no action of our own—who desirest not the death of sinners but their repentance—who dost *prefer* that gifts should be offered Thee from the created things that Thou hast ordained for our normal human succour—who, by a marvellous disposition and arrangement in Thy creation, hast decreed to display the method of our salvation even by means of inanimate objects—who didst marvellously create the dignity of human nature and still more marvellously re-create it, grant [the prayer goes on] that we may be partakers in His Divinity who in our humanity did not disdain to share." And again, "O God, who by the self-humiliation of Thy Son hast set upright the prostrate world—who by

the light of the Holy Spirit didst teach the hearts of the faithful—who preparest invisible good things for those who love Thee—whose Providence is never mistaken in its dispositions—who dost correct the crooked, gather the scattered, and conserve what Thou hast gathered—who hast introduced consolation for the toil of men even by means of dumb animals—who by both sacraments and doctrine dost re-form us to Thine image. . . .”

So tremendous is the treasury of the Liturgy that even this sub-department, so to call it, of the Collects provides quite inexhaustible riches for us to meditate upon. Our only point here is this—we ought to pray; but we ought not to plunge or drift into prayer in a haphazard way: we ought first to recollect that it *is* into God’s special and responsive presence that we are going: it is, then, well that we should recollect more particularly *what* God is and what He is prepared to be to us: little by little our mind will then be turned away from self to God, or return to self only from the end, as it were, of God. To see ourselves, at least, rather more as God sees us! to tend, at least, to judge ourselves with His judgment! to ask, what in our innermost conscience we know He wishes us to ask and to renounce all that we realise jars upon, clashes with,

His perfection ! That certainly is the advance towards praying prayers that cannot but be answered. St. Paul said that " what to pray, and how, we know not." It remains that if we learn to pray as we have said, we shall be praying both what, and as, we should.

Reluctantly, yet thinking it right to do so, we add a few lines on the ' answering ' of prayer, and even, upon what is called ' miraculous ' answer.

First, it is sometimes said that, on the whole, prayer is *not* answered, and that those who pray and are not answered ' get out of the difficulty ' by saying that ' God saw it would not be good for me to get what I was asking.' But why is that a ' getting out of ' a difficulty ? We have certainly not hesitated to acknowledge that we are very short-sighted, and liable to want all sorts of things that would *not* be ' good ' for us. Now, if God is good—and we saw that He is—He obviously will not give us what is bad for us ; and if He is wise—as we also saw Him to be—He will certainly not succumb to the folly of half our petitions. Any man of experience, looking back, can see what a disaster it would have been had something happened according to his desire—he can see that over and over again. It is, then, a very good prayer to renounce, in the depths of our will, the very thing we are

asking for, to renounce it as a thing *willed* by *me*, and to hand the affair wholly over to God. "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick!" was a very good prayer. The fact was placed before Him, and was left there.

People proceed to say: "Well, then, if God is wise and good, why pray at all? Why not just leave everything to Him, and spend your time more profitably than on your knees?" That might hold good if we were puppets in God's hands—if we were meant to play no personal part at all in our relations with God. But we are not puppets! We are extremely active creatures, or should be! It is according to our nature to express ourselves; extreme self-obliteration, the suppression of all manifestation of emotion, and even of emotion itself, may be a British tendency; but it was not always so, and need not be the ideal method of self-treatment. Anyway, I have not any intention of preserving a poker-face towards God. I propose to set forth, according to my nature, both what I want and what I feel. This will not at all interfere with my innermost 'renunciation' or abdication of my will. The old-fashioned Evangelical, who liked to describe himself as 'wrestling in prayer,' was quite justified in doing so, provided that he did not think he would be heard 'for his much speaking,' let

alone for the physical energy he put into his prayers, especially when public. Making grimaces, squirming, yelping—none of this adds anything to prayer, though (if you are quite unconscious of its happening) it may indirectly witness to the strength of your desire. And if you are at all likely to do any of that, I should recall Our Lord's advice to shut yourself up in your private room and not let anyone see you. But speak to God, anyway, naturally, and not as though you were reading Him an illuminated address.

"Ah," people will proceed, "but is not that exactly what does happen in churches? All those Collects of yours, psalms, litanies, are as unnatural as possible. I prefer to worship God in the great open spaces, under the blue sky—I can't see why I cannot do that while playing a game of golf—taking the children out for a walk—looking at lovely views—quite as well as when droning psalms!" Well, who asks anyone to drone? So far as my school went, psalms were, if anything, shouted. And if I live in a slum, I haven't got any lovely views. And it would be interesting to know how many men worship God, 'in their own way' even, while playing golf. Though of course a man *can* love and worship God quite as well out of doors as in, and alone as in company.

But since three-quarters of our time it is pouring with rain and totally lightless, a good deal of anything that we do has to be done indoors. Hence prayer under roofs. And since we ought to pray to God in *every* way that is suited to our nature, and since we are social animals quite as truly as we are individuals, we ought to worship God at least sometimes socially, collectively, publicly. The English seem to be swinging from a certain mania for privacy and reticence, to the opposite pole (if novels are any guide) of exhibitionism. The Church always preserves a balance. Pray privately by all means: in your bedroom, inside your mind. Or again, seated lonely on a hill-top, beneath the bright blue dome, one with the winds and the buttercups. But also, indoors as well as out of doors, along with your fellow-men who are of like mind with you, conjoining and communicating and consolidating your prayer—glad to be one in a ‘great multitude that no man can number.’ “The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee!” A manifold human Unity, displaying itself as such.

“Well, anyhow,” they say, “why pray for absurd things, like rain, or winning a cricket-match (as Catholic boys so often do), or getting rid of a headache? As if the laws of

Nature would be altered just for your sake ! ” Now, ‘ Nature ’ ! Nature includes me, and all I am doing. It includes, therefore, Me Praying. As if Nature meant nothing but atmospherics and the material elements of this interactive universe ! It means, All that is in any way. Now, All that Is, shall be, or could be, is seen by God in His eternity. I will not say ‘ foreseen.’ In God’s eternity there is neither before nor after. He sees all that is, as it is ; all that could be, as it could be. He sees an arrangement of facts, *minus* prayer, and a myriad rearrangements of the same facts, prayer having been added to them, and prayer prayed well or ill, with faith, with love, with ardour, or doubtfully, bookishly, mechanically. In *willing*, in eternity, the disposition of events, God takes all elements into accounts. Therefore, obviously, the whole harmony of the Universe throughout itself will differ according to what elements it contains, and to what forces shall have been liberated. This should be patent to anyone who loves to acknowledge the ‘ reign of Law ’ in creation. A mental or spiritual force is quite as real as a physical one, and is constantly affecting the material coefficient in the world ; and this again ought to be recognised by those who so constantly say that material events condition mental or

spiritual ones—your character, say they, depends upon your endocrine glands. We gladly admit interaction! But we insist that each inter-agent affects the other. I have therefore not the slightest disinclination for praying for fine weather, or that I may find something I have lost, or that somebody's mind may be changed. In a word, God, Author of all that is and acts, 'disposes' His Creation differently according as it contains prayer, or does not. Let us, then, be quite clear that the notion that God 'cannot,' for example, make the weather depend upon prayer, is due to not perceiving that God is fully Origin and Master of all that is: that His eternal Vision of all that is includes all that can be, at whatsoever period of the world's history; that obviously the upshot of something which has an added ingredient is different from the upshot of what lacks it; that prayer *is* such an ingredient—it is a real force set going by man, who is real, towards God, who also is real.

This seems to me to simplify the problem of 'miracles.' Why do men dislike the idea of 'miracles'? (Of course, we insist that if someone claims that an event is miraculous, he must show evidence for his claim!) Because, first, they say—quite rightly—that given a certain set of conditions, and none

other, an equally certain set of consequences will occur. Thus, given that in the course of centuries rocks have settled down into a definite shape and density, there, according to the nature of rocks, they will remain. But suppose a man comes along who wants to build a cathedral, and sees that that sort of rock will serve his purpose?

He introduces a totally new *sort* of laws. He is a man of intelligence and free will—the rock has neither intelligence nor free will. He causes a block of rock to be excavated. (It could not excavate itself.) He chisels it, and carves it, and makes it become the capital of a pillar in his cathedral. No ‘law’ has been defied. Certainly not the architect’s mental laws—if he did his mathematics wrong, the hewn rock would be the wrong size, the wrong shape, the wrong density. He is strictly obedient to the laws of his mind. And he scrupulously observes the ‘laws’ that govern the rock—if it is soft rock, he must not put a heavy weight upon it: if it is very hard rock, he will not attempt to carve it into delicate forms. No law on either side is in any way defied. Yet the rock, which apart from him would have lain indefinitely merged into the quarry-face, has been removed from where it was, shaped, and shaped *in view of* a special position and

function in that complicated unity which a good building is.

Now, the same can happen in regard of my body or my mind, unless indeed I have the nerve to say that there *are* no other laws save those which regulate my body and my mind in their normal and actual condition. Who would have the effrontery to say that I am the sum-total of what is possible in any and every situation? As well might the stone say that there *could be* no architect and no sculptor. I repeat: the stone, left to itself, 'obeys' its own system of laws: a man, possessed of a much higher system of 'laws'—inasmuch as he has a mind, which the stone hasn't—arrives, and, remaining rigorously true to his own mental laws, applies those laws and his will and *its* laws to the stone, whose own set of laws he scrupulously respects, and thereby makes of the stone something that *essentially* it could not have become by itself. In much the same way, you may say that when a 'miracle' takes place, no 'natural' law is violated—using 'natural' as meaning what is concerned with material things as such—but higher laws are brought into play and are applied to that material, with results essentially exceeding anything that could otherwise have been looked for.

Hence a perfect 'order' is observed, though a richer one than what is normally exhibited to our eye; no law is 'violated,' but more laws are obeyed; it is as absurd to say, for example, that the science of medicine is interfered with by a bodily miracle of healing, as to say that the law of gravity is interfered with when the architect causes a stone 'contrary to its nature' to leave the womb of the quarry and find itself in mid-air as the capital of a pillar. There have even been those—and ministers of religion at that!—who have said that a miracle would be a 'caprice' of God's; in working one He would be acting like an oriental sultan, and interfering in the legitimate affairs of His people—He ought, apparently, to be a Constitutional Monarch, and do as much as men, His subjects, settled that He might. The mere statement of this idea suffices to exhibit its absurdity. We need not linger over it.

We have indeed said this much about miracles, because there are those who imagine that so much as to believe in God lands you forthwith in the sphere of the 'miraculous,' and hold that miracles anyway are unthinkable. It does not; and they are not.

However, though it be true that we cannot think of a single philosophical argument

which could discredit the possibility of miracles, and while so far are they from spoiling the 'order' of the universe that they insert it into an order more complete and sublime, yet we have to remember that Our Lord Himself did not place physical miracles at the top, so to say, of the scale of those good things He had to offer us. He regarded them chiefly as 'signs,' pointing farther and higher than themselves. "Greater things shall ye see," He announced after a miracle of what we should call 'clairvoyance.' "Believe Me for the very works' sake," if you can find no higher grounds for doing so. Moreover, praying for a miracle cannot easily be done as it should be. I may be praying with a sort of *sous entendu* that I don't believe, in my heart, that God can—or anyhow will—do it for me. That is a rather impertinent way of praying. Or with an idea of somehow 'testing' God. Or with purely personal obstinacy—God must and shall do this for me, because I want it so much! Even when what we pray for is spiritual, and manifestly good in itself, we may be asking with reservations, as St. Augustine did when he prayed for chastity, sub-consciously (as we might now put it) adding, "but not yet." And finally, the answer may have indeed been given without our perceiving it, and only

long afterwards may we realise that God had been with us, say, in our time of trouble, masterfully and lovingly disposing of all things for our weal.

It remains that the radical difference lies between men who never pray, and men who do. The former remain enclosed within their own poor circle of self and similar selves : the latter have escaped into a world of spirit, of power, of wisdom and of love.

EPILOGUE

IT is difficult to conclude this book with words that shall not seem banal in their simplicity. For it has always seemed difficult, to the present writer, to say much about, or even to think much *about* any very great subject. He would very much prefer to allow the simple belief in God as more surely existing than anything else, in God as his All-Mighty Creator and All-Wise Providence, as his very loving Father, and as more present to him than he is to himself, to exercise its intrinsic effect upon his soul, and, in God's goodness, upon all he cares for, than to become the subject—I will not say, of speculation, but of human analysis and argument—of discussion or panegyric, or to be in any way a theme for 'literature.' Nor, as was said above, can he habitually think about God apart from His manifestation in Christ. Hence, not to insist on the broken half-hours in which he has been able to write these pages (always an uncomfortable thing to try to do), and his time-limits, which again and again the incredible patience and generosity of the publishers have allowed him to disregard, he has not felt at his ease while writing.

In any case, he is sure that having unfolded, so to say, part of the great fan of thoughts and

consequences that radiate from an all-inclusive Fact, this ought to be closed up again so soon as possible, and the simplicity of that Fact be returned to. Thus, everyone (I hope) loves flowers. We love them forthrightly and without analysis. All the same, it is not at all a bad thing to have some botanical lessons ; to pull a flower to pieces ; to learn how to look for, in it, all sorts of details and exquisite elements that would otherwise have escaped one. The same with a piece of music. But it would be appalling if one stopped there, having reduced the lovely living thing to a quantity of catalogue-able parts. If I cannot let all that slip back into the vital whole, the flower and the music are for ever lost to me. The Living God *is* not a philosophical treatise, though, to my great benefit and at my very great risk, I might be able to construct one concerning Him. In fact, what is very valuable almost always has great dangers annexed to it. May I, after thinking and arguing, not discover that I have desiccated my very soul ?

If I believe in God, I am happy. At once people say, ' There you are with your opium ! You believe in God *to make* you comfortable ! You are Browning, with his absurd ' God's in His heaven, all's right with the world ! ' whereas everyone knows it isn't, and if Pippa

thought it was, she was a fool'." But I don't believe in God *in order that* I may be happy, let alone comfortable; and it is a shocking fallacy to suggest that because a thing makes me happy, therefore it is a fiction administered to myself by myself as a drug. A good thing *ought* to make me happy. There is a modern cult—if not of glumness, anyway of emotionlessness, which has nothing to be said for it. Belief in God, then, may often make me very uncomfortable, and at times very sad (because I see how far away I am from harmonising, in much that is in me, with that belief). None the less, it makes me happy at heart, which is exactly what I ought to be. Happiness is the consciousness of well-being. And no one can say that I ought not to be well.

I achieve, then, Peace, not coma: balance and equipoise, not a sort of pyramidal settling down into immobility. I become more of a self—I tend to become a 'character,' not an accidental man, and not just a 'type,' a stereotype, fashioned by circumstances. I lose not only the sense of fear which besets so many of our generation, but the sense of futility which bites its bitter fangs into the heart and brain of so many who began life gladly and strongly, and after a few years find that life—assessed by exterior standards—is

offering them nothing, and that they are 'coming to nothing.' I am, too, enabled to think better of my neighbour, just because I know that even if I am right in my judgment of him so far as my knowledge goes, my knowledge goes but a very little way, and how do I know what God sees in him, and foresees about him? I can become gentler, kindlier, more willing to co-operate, far more hopeful.

To 'co-operate.' I shall, in my small obscure position, see that I can at least add my item to the formation of a General Will for good. This means, that I can become a constructive element in Society, and not just be swept along by its movement, nor submerged under it, with merely the nostrils of my self-hood, for a gasping interval, above the smothering flood.

Having seen what man is worth to God, and to Christ, I shall want to do my utmost to save him from injustice or even neglect. I shall, prudently, want to start always where I am, and I am, first and foremost, in my home. I shall want to make my home and family (whether I am parent, or son) into a firm-knit living unity—and be quite ready for the give-and-take that this implies—concentrating chiefly upon the 'give.' Again, I do not 'give' *because* it 'will be given to me': but if I *do* give, most certainly I shall receive.

I shall, so far as I can, look further outward to anything in which I am incorporated—with which I am co-corporate : my parish ; my borough ; my county. I shall, to start with, learn many facts—truth—reality—of which I *could* remain placidly ignorant. I can be ‘mentally defective,’ not necessarily, but in fact, as regards so much of what is around me, and with which I am (whether I attend to it or not) organically united. Blake honestly could think that England was a “green and pleasant land.” Much of it could be. Most of it is neither the one nor the other. Verhaeren wrote a whole volume of his poems on *Les Villes Tentaculaires*. An American wrote a novel called *The Octopus*, though that was not so much about towns as about ramifying business, railways in particular. But anyway, we have to try to ‘build Jerusalem’ wherever we are : in one cinema-deluded country-village, in one drab suburb, in one slum. We shall determine to have no more slums ; but our alternative will not be jerry-built new towns, nor yet inhuman flats. We shall insist on health-productive conditions for our fellow-men, fellow-women, children that, after all, are of *our* Family ; yet we shall know that some of the healthiest bodies are linked with ‘minds diseased.’ Hence we shall seek every means to ensure a sane and

complete education. Juvenal's *mens sana in corpore sano* is constantly quoted as though it meant that a mind will be sound if it is in a body that is healthy. The poet prayed—in the right order—for a healthy mind, in a healthy body. Mind came first. Half the healthiest minds that history has known have existed in bodies that were far from 'well.' Have you ever read of 'Hermann the Cripple'—A.D. 1000? Probably not. No matter. This man, whose body was such that he could—from birth—neither properly stand, nor sit, nor lie, had one of the most alert, versatile, sweet, happy minds that anyone could possess. It remains that we shall want to 'educate,' and to do so supremely in such a way as to put the child in contact with its God. "Religion is not useful to the Government!" Appalling misconception of what religion does; or ghastly misconception of what a Government should be!

We are sure to pass at once to the thought of those who, however well educated and even well-fed, pass into a way of life where things are anything rather than 'well' with them. We may possibly have become hypnotised by the vision of what are called 'depressed areas.' May we indeed become determined—set our teeth—that the men and women and children who live there shall not be forced to

live out their lives in conditions that are sub-human. But how very far are they from being the only districts *within* which hundreds and thousands live, whose life is so uncertain as to be a shocking challenge even to what calls itself the 'State.' *Caritas Christi urget nos.* Christ, and His love for men—His love palely reflected by that of our own half-Christianised hearts—presses on us, coaxes us, kicks us, gives us no rest, until God shall have reached not only all those who are prepared to attend to Him, but those who are unaware of Him, and those especially who detest Him. The more a man is His enemy, the more can He love him, since Christ, His spokesman, took much trouble to tell us to love our enemies and took our loving of our friends for granted—indeed, said that of course Christians would do that, for even the pagans did so.

And all this has to be extended to nations, and to races. It is patent that England, France, Italy, Germany, Egypt, Palestine, the Balkans, the Russias, the Dominions (Canada is in two halves: Australia has its mysterious Aborigines: Africa, even South Africa, exists as a most inharmonious complexity), the United States, not to insist on Japan with its vast future and China with its immemorial past, find it impossible to discover a basis on to which they equally might

tread—assuming that they wanted to—and that none of them are at present trying to do so taking *God* into account. Germany does not *start* from the certainty that equally with herself the Spaniard and the Frenchman are her brothers because of God, and of Christ. The Rumanian does not so think of the Hungarian, nor the white South African of the Black. Because we all, all we humans, are united by our created nature, does it follow that I would treat, externally, a Bantu, a Malayan, a Slovak, as I treat, exteriorly, my fellow-Briton? Of course not. Nothing more inept. But, interiorly, I must—if I am a God-server; a Christian. Because I may think a man ‘a better man than I am,’ it does not follow that I shall wish to give him a cup of tea, a bed (when he prefers a mat), or even a hand-shake. All these arabesques stuccoed on the façade of solid buildings count for little. What counts is what is interior: what, within me, I really think, despite all the frontage-decoration—and I am not unaware that decoration can tell you a lot! What about the Greeks, who seem to us to have delighted in angles, yet whose every horizontal and perpendicular was most subtly curved? What I mean is this: You can have any amount of union, and ought to have a lot more than you possess. But, this will not

interfere with differences. In fact, how can you have union without different ? But you cannot get union, or its consequent, Peace, unless you see yourselves as sons—at present, belligerent sons, of one Father. If, not God, but Aggrandisement, Enrichment, flattering History, cajoling Future, govern you, then you will be slaves to a momentary thing, a selfish thing, what the Old Testament calls an adulterous thing. There is nothing foreseen but more hate, more jealousy and rivalry, more misery for the many, and, as often as not, more suicide.

In proportion, then, as I know and love God, I am peaceful and happy within myself, and love, and am loved by, my fellow-men. In proportion as my sinful or silly self plays false to this, I spoil both my own present, and my own future and eternity. God—and self and the world intelligible : God-less, the general self and the world detestable, and, without hope.

The Author recommends the following books :

God : Papers read at the Cambridge Summer School, 1930. Burns Oates and Washbourne.

God and Reason, by W. J. Brosnan. Fordham University Press, New York.

God Infinite and Reason, by the same. Fordham University Press, New York.

God and Intelligence, by Dr. Fulton J. Sheen. Longmans.

Principles of Natural Theology, by G. H. Joyce. Longmans.

The Desire of God in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, by J. E. O'Mahony. Longmans.

God : His Knowability. Pohle-Preuss Series. Herder.

Faith and Revealed Truth, by Dr. G. D. Smith ; *God the Creator*, by Dr. B. V. Miller ; *Divine Providence*, by Archbishop Downey ; *God and His Attributes*, by A. Reys : *The Treasury of the Faith Series*. Burns Oates and Washbourne.

The Editor would call the attention of the Reader to three further volumes in the 'Needs of To-day' Series : 'Our Need for God,' by the Rt. Rev. A. W. F. Blunt, D.D. ; 'You Can Find God,' by Edward Shillito ; and 'Can We Believe in God?' by C. A. Alington, D.D.

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